SHELLEY

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

P. B. Shelley

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

(INTRODUCTION, TEXT, NOTES, QUESTIONS & ANSWERS)

Publisher :

Kitab Mahal Publishing Co.

Urdu Bazar. Lahore.

Phone : 66550

[redacted]

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

The Poet P. B. Shelley and His Age

SHELLEY belongs to an age in English poetry which is known as the Romantic age, or the period of Romantic Revival (1798-1830). Now 'Romantic movement' and 'Romantic Revival' are only convenient critical labels to characterise the new flowering of creative energy in the early nineteenth-century English literature, following the decay of the Neo-classical tradition. The Romantic movement may be described, in general terms, as a complex process of liberation of human heart, imagination and spirit from the fetters of the Eighteenth-century cult of Reason and mechanical conception of the Universe. It was a revolt against the 18th-century ways of thinking, writing and believing, and a revival of the old Mediaeval and Elizabethan forms of poetry, literary manner, and unsophisticated outlook, together with renewed appreciation of Greek literature, myth and philosophy.

The movement gathered momentum after a slow and painful incubation and then swept through England, Germany and France with different results. The English Romanticism too : its rise in the very heart of the 18th century-neo-classicism in the form of 'sentimentalism' in the literature of the Middle class, in whose heart the old fire of puritanism was not completely defunct. 'Sentimentalism' was based upon the concept of the fundamental goodness of human nature, and holiness of heart's affection, which began to colour the thought of eighteenth century by slow degrees. It spread from comedy and domestic tragedy into the periodical essays, and the novels of Richardson, Goldsmith and Laurence Sterne. It invaded the domain of philosophy and dethroned the supremacy of Reason, so that Hume could assert, "It is a good thing to trust to instincts, to give oneself up to nature, without being duped by any logical illusion".

The next symptom of romanticism was Gothic revival in which Walpole led the way to Sir Walter Scott. The term 'Gothic' lost its pejorative association, and came to be regarded, more and more, as a style indicative of larger freedom and higher unity than 'classic'.

The opposition to the 18th-century urban outlook expressed itself in the glorification of Nature and of the holy plan of nature and sympathetic interest in the 'simple annals of the rude rustics and peasants, living in close union with nature, unspoiled by the vices of the city civilization. The importance which gradually came to be attached to these children of the soil, arose from the sanctity associated with Nature and all that is connected with the universe of

nature. Cowper's dictum 'God made the country, and man made the town' is only a straw which shows which way the wind was blowing.

The shift of emphasis from sophisticated intellectualism to the basic instincts and the simplicities of life, transformed the poet's attitude to childhood. In the eighteenth century the child was regarded as an undeveloped man and when ripe manhood was equated with the mentality of the child the intention was pure contempt and ridicule. But in the romantic age the child became 'father to man', 'the eye among the blind', over whom the light of immortality broods like the eye of a kind master over his favourite servant.

The poetry of the age marks, indeed, the re-birth of the human spirit and in it, as V. D. Scudder has rightly observed eternal youth expresses itself in ringing tones of wonder and eagerness, of fullness of life either for joy or for pain. The very cadences have cast aside grave restrictions and assumed buoyant and varied grace of adolescence...... No wonder, therefore, that in poetry from Blake to Keats, we find embedded a rich vein of mythopoeic faculty associated with the infancy of the Aryan race, the golden age of Hellas, and vigorous youth of Norse men, when some of the greatest cycles of world mythology were created and evolved.

The period also saw the culmination of that keen interest in the culture, past glory and present political status of Greece, which manifested itself in the age of Pope, and found its most spectacular climax in Byron's dramatic role as the leader of the Greek war of independence.

Hellenic revival in Germany was marked by an ardent and aggressive enthusiasm, and the reaction it evoked was equally violent and decisive in its effect. In England the Hellenic current was more placid and pervasive, and while Wordsworth and Coleridge assumed the superiority of the Christian Deity over the nature-gods of Greek mythology, the influence of Greek myth, art and literature and of Greek philosophy represented by Plato and Aristotle, was deep and wide.

The lure of the remote and unfamiliar, of strange and exotic was very powerful in this age—as Cazamian has aptly put it: "In every clime the mysterious secret of the world was being penetrated, and yet there remained ample room for fresh discovery, so that the spirit of adventure and intrepidity of explorer lost nothing of their former glamour." But more important than the physical voyages in the remote seas, were the scholarly travels in 'the realms of gold' which brought home rich spoils of oriental poetry and mythology, which re-inforced a tradition waxing strong under the combind influence of Hellenic and Mediaeval revivals.

The wonder and curiosity which marked the romantic temper has been tersely embodied in the definition of Romanticism as 'the renascence of wonder'. One aspect of it was the revival of the child's vision, which is already visible in the early poems of Blake

and finds great support in the famous remark of Coleridge that 'to carry the feelings of childhood into the years of maturity is a mark of genius'. Two of its main aspects are reflected in the same critic's account of the planning of the *Lyrical Ballads*: Under this plan Wordsworth was to treat of the common rustic life and characters and familiar objects of nature, which were to be invested with the charm of novelty through the colouring of imagination—'the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the poet's dream'. Coleridge, on the other hand, was to deal with super-natural characters and agencies, with a semblance of probability and human behaviour contributed by the poet's understanding of the truth of human heart and mind.'

The same curiosity manifested itself in the poet's ardent desire to probe into and perceive the mysteries of nature and hidden secrets of the world behind the appearance of the familiar world. Wordsworth has elaborated that mystic mood in which we are laid asleep in body, but become a living soul, and with an eye made serene by the deeper sense of harmony, we see into the life of things; while this curiosity impelled Shelley to haunt ruins and grave yards and invoke ghost, and spirits in order to learn about that word from 'whose bourne no traveller returns'.

Such minds were naturally dissatisfied with the tenets of orthodox and outworn christianty and sought to discover new substitutes— religion of nature, or idealism of Plato, with its belief in the reality of heavenly Ideas behind the painted veil of the illusory existence.

Arnold has observed that the Romantic poets did not know enough because they deliberately turned their backs on the wealth of knowledge which science was piling up steadily. The remark is a misleading generalisation because Shelley, at least, was keenly interested in scientific experiments and discoveries which were calculated to explain the working of the strange forces of nature and secret energies and agencies which had made the universe a dark riddle. Science was also interesting to him as an instrument of Progress, which was popular in the age, because allied with the romantic belief in the perfectibility of man it provided a solid basis to their dream of the golden age or the Millennium.

While these liberalising trends were impregnating the dense man of poetry in England, the French revolution, with its stirring slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, blew its deafening clarion, which sent a vigorous tide of new life surging into the feeble veins of literature in the pangs of a new birth.

The outbreak of the Revolution was greeted by most poets as the herald of a golden age, and Wordsworth was stating a bare truth when he wrote about the impression it created :

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was the very heaven.

But Wordsworth and Coleridge recanted their faith in it as the

glory of the Revolution degenerated into the Reign of Terror, followed by the military despotism of Napolean. But the younger romantics in England, Byron, Shelley and Keats, who were physically removed from that historic upheaval, absorbed the spirit of the Revolution into their blood, as it were, and two of them at least, Byron and Shelley, became the living dynamos of revolt. Yet there is a fundamental difference between the two which a critic has put so nicely that one cannot resist the temptation of recalling his words : "Byron is a poet of revolt; Shelley of revolution. He lives with the winds above the highest mountain tops, above the home of thunder where Byron dwells, whence he (Byron) descends, with a storm of sounding rhetoric, and avalanches or lava of icy or fiery sarcasm, to desolate the smiling cornfields of average morality.........Shelley's poetry is like a vivid sheet lightning......shedding strange illumination on the lower world, yet a thing of the upper air. He stirs us with thoughts beyond the reaches of our soul, and rushes ahead in the van of forlorn hope of the world, chanting his shrill cry of revolution, thinking to shatter the very gates of Hell with the monotonous persistence of the lark song of his, which flutters round two notes—liberty and love." (*Grierson*)

These tendencies combined together to vitalize the mythological tradition in the poetry of the nineteenth century, and make it as rich, and complex and popular as it had been in the age of Spenser and Shakespeare. The influence of Elizabethan writers was pervasive in the Romantic era, but the essential condition of the two ages were divergent enough to preclude the possibility of imitation or reproduction. The writers of the nineteenth century, flourishing, as they did, at a considerably later date when a vast body of critical and creative literature had gathered round the old myths, displayed a greater freedom in the handling and treatment of the primitive myths and legends, and their approach was less spontaneous and naive, but more self-conscious and critical than that of the majority of their Elizabethan predecessors. Moreover, the Romantic poets were not hampered by religious tradition in their approach to the classical myths; and being individualists, treasuring their own ideas and theories above any thing else, their interpretations of old myths are more personal and provocative than those of the Elizabethan poets.

By way of concluding their brief consideration a word must be said about the poetry produced in this age. The Romantic poets were sharply opposed to the precepts and practice of their predecessor of the neo-classical era. Poetry for them was not imitation but creation, and it was an expression of passion and imagination. It was the spontaneous overflow of the poet's own feelings and emotions, which the world was bound to appreciate because the poet was 'a man speaking to men'. But this did not mean that he was a mere purveyor of recreation to his readers, bound by their taste and desires; he was, rather, their teacher and guide, refiner of their heart and their mind, who 'looked before and after' and framed his

message with an eye upon posterity, or as Shelley puts it in his 'Defence of Poetry' 'the poets are the uncrowned legislators' for the ages not yet born.

Imagination was his creative power which was set in motion by 'inspiration', the sudden accession of a new energy, either external and involuntary or rising like the colour of a flower from the dark depth of the poet's own soul. 'The poet's eye in fine frenzy rolling may fix itself on the world around him and invest it with the colour, beauty and mystery of a fairy land, or it may roam at large in the world unseen and body forth the forms of things unknown which his pen may turn them to shape and thus 'give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name'.

This emphasis on emotion or the emotional equivalent of thought underlined the primacy of the lyrical nature of poetry, and as a lyric was believed to be the incarnation of intense moments or inspired impulse, by nature brief and momentary, a long poem came to be regarded as a combination of a series of lyrical passages linked together by stretches of versified prose.

The romantic sensibility' with its emphasis on depth of passion and freedom of, imagination, necessitated a renovation and enrichment of poetic medium and its vehicle, which meant the revival of the complex measures of Spenser and Milton, and the invention of new lyrical forms and measures, simple as well as complex. In the matter of poetic style the reaction against the gaudy and 'inane phraseology' of the eighteenth century, as Wordsworth put it, paved the way for simplicity, naturalness, sincerity and freshness of poetic style, but it could not prevent the younger enthusiasts, like Shelley and Keats, from adopting a style of Elizabethan exuberance, with the pomp and prodigality of the verbal wealth, excess and diversity of images and similitudes, combined with occasional recourse to metaphors and symbols as the only effective mode for the expression of feelings too deep and obscure for direct language.

In short the poetry of the Romantic era has the vigour, the richness, the glow and the glory, the ardour and youthful prodigality which we find in the literature of the Elizabethan age.

His Personality

It is now time to give a brief sketch of the man Shelley, because whatever he wrote, in prose or in verse, bears an unmistakable stamp of his peculiar personality. Shelley himself has given us the best brief picture of his form and spirit, in words vivid and precise. In *Adonais* he has introduced himself among the mourners of less note as :

One frail Farm
A phantom among men ; companionless
......he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,

> Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
> With feeble steps O'er the world's wilderness......
> Pursued by his own thoughts.
> A Pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—
> A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
> Girt round with weakness......neglected and apart
> A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.
>
> Urania murmured, "Who art thou ?"
>
> He answered not, but with a sudden hand
> Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
> *Which was like Cain's or Christ's !*"

Every word in this self-sketch is true and significant. In no poet was the moral sense so well developed as in Shelley and none has devoted his life and rich gift of poetry to the betterment of humanity and the glorification of man's native dignity so exclusively as this young utopian who was consistently charitable and selfless, loving and hungry for love and sympathy. He was really a Christ-like figure, all compact of love, yet misunderstood by society, which slandered, persecuted and bounded him out of England to wander on the continent like Cain with his branded forehead. He was regarded by most of men around him as a rare prodigy of crime and pollution as he himself wrote in 1819, and a cursory glance at the Reviews and magazines of the day will fully confirm this fact.

The explanation of this paradox lies in the singularity of his own appearance, nature and behaviour. He was 'a phantom among men', and Leigh Hunt, among a host of observers has recorded that 'he was like a spirit that has darted out of its art and found itself in another world'. Others have noted the beauty and delicacy of his face, an elegant and slender flower whose head drooped from being surcharged with rain'. Two of his friends have pictured him as 'a girl in boy's clothes, swiftly gliding and blushing'. This is strength (of soul) girt round with weakness'. Hazlitt has referred to his two voices, one, soft and gentle, and the other shrill and grating.

Such a figure was naturally a constant butt of the boys at school, and we learn from records how he was pursued and persecuted by his fellow students, at bay 'with eyes flashing like those of a tiger'. This experience developed a complex which the psychologists have named 'paranoia', which is marked by delusions of persecution, and among its symptoms, they have noted, the operation of higher psychic powers, which may border on ecstasy and visions of vast and vague forms, such as 'infinity', eternity, charm, abyss etc. Being adrogynous by nature he loved characters in which the attributes of male and female sexes were blended; his heroes have feminine tenderness and heroines the masculine courage. This probably explains his fascination for incestuous relationship, where the beloved is the 'soul's sister' of her lover.

His behaviour was, by the same token, unconventional, quixotic and at times childish. He was not only 'Ariel', but also a 'Peter

Pan', a boy who refused to grow up. His reforming zeal frequently brought these trials into prominence, whether one thinks of his youthful pamphlet, The *Necessity* of *Atheism* that he wrote and ingeniously distributed at Oxford, and got the sentence of expulsion from the university, or his *Address to the Irish People* or his imprudent chivalrous first marriage, at the age of 19, with Harriet Westbrook, which cost him so much woe and ended in his social ostracism.

His nature was ethereal; he was tangential to the earth, its concrete realities and mundane concerns. His enthusiasm was kindled by books, not by experience, and his main inspiration came from abstract thoughts and concepts—love, beauty, liberty. He moved in the high rarefied atmosphere of philosophy and metaphysics, was more conversant with Forms and Phantoms than with the realities of the world. His mind was always fixed upon things 'afar from the spheres of our sorrows', and he has naturally been described as 'Ariel', the 'footless bird of paradise', 'the naked Seraph' and a beautiful angel with luminous wings.

Freedom was the breath of his nostrils and he was up in arms against authority, parental, organizational, social, religious and political. His pages are full of curses and diatribes against kings, priests and despotic gods, Pagan and Christian, and he has naturally idolized great rebels, like Satan and Prometheus. He was a believer in the native goodness, beauty and nobility of man, and his heart bled at the slavery. degradation, disfigurement and corruption of human tnaure. He was haunted by the golden dream of Mellennium and was sanguine about its advent in the long run, but he was too impatient to trust in the efficacy of slow and painful evolution resulting from the hard and patient struggles of generations of workers. In fact, he united in himself the fanaticism of a reformer with the impractical optimism of a dreamer or utopian and he desired to revolutionize the world with 'the incantation of his verse'. In the Preface to his *Prometheus Unbound* he makes an illuminating confession, "Didactic poetry is my abhorrence......my purpose has simply been to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealism of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love and admire, and trust and hope, and endure, reasoned principles or moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passengers trample into dust, "although they would bear the harvest of happiness." This supplies the link between his poetic ideal and his reforming zeal.

His deep dissatisfaction with the condition of man on this earth, his subjection to death, mutability, time and disease bred in him an insatiable curiosity about the mystery of the universe, the point of permanence behind the flux of life or about the immutable realities hidden behind the painted veil of earthly existence. This explains his habit of haunting churchyards and ruins; his interest in

scientific experiments and discoveries and his reported proposal to inquire of an infant about the immortality of the soul.

Above all, it made him an eager and devouring reader of philosophical works, beginning with the 18th century rationalists in England and France, and emotionalists like Rouseau, social anarchists and utopians, like Godwin, pantheists like Berkeley, and ending in his final settlement in Platonic idealism as the one system most congenial to his natural cast of mind. Christianity and its God he hated with all his heart, and Christ he finally came to appreciate and admire, but Platonic and allied idealism answered his inquiry about the mystery of man and of human life, about the real face behind the painted and myriad-shaped mask:

The One remains, the many fade and pass,
Heaven's light for ever shines and earth's shadow fly.
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Till death tramples it under foot.

He was torn between contradictory moods which are clearly reflected in his poetry—hope—despair, optimism and melancholy, high-soaring ambition or aspiration alternating with fainting fits or sudden falls from dizzy heights. It is now time to torn to their flavour of his poetry and devote some space to the consideration of its quality, the quintessence of a nature so volatile and ethereal.

Shelley had fluent pen and his poetical output is rich as well as diversified, consisting, as it does, of a large number of lyrics, short and long, simple and complex, of quite a few long narrative and dramatic poem together with full fledged plays. Yet the essential note of his poetry is lyrical, and Shelley, indeed, is a lyricist *par excellence*. Lyricism is pervasive in his work and permeates even his non-lyrical poetry. A genuine lyric is a strain of pure song which gushes out spontaneously from the core of a deeply-moved heart, like the waters of a spring from the bosom of the earth. Its pre-requisites are a sensitive, passionate and inflammable heart and a command over the musical resources of the language, with epithets and images in perfect accord with the sentiment and the rhythm, so that its form and content appear to be born together in their blended might.

Shelley's lyrics fulfil all these conditions and they reveal the personality of a singer whose heart became automatically musical under the stress of the least stimulus like the fabled statue of Memnon which emitted waves of melodies when touched by the light of dawn, or like his own favourite lyre, resonant of melodious sounds as currents of the air passed through it. Under his quick inspiration his ecstatic soul became winged, like the soul of the Platonic lover under the warmth of the effluence transmitted by the beloved's eyes, and it soared into the higher air and like his own skylark 'hidden in the golden lightning of the sunken sun, it poured down 'profuse

strains of un-premeditaled art'. "The spontaneity, the splendid abandonment, the musical rush of the lines, these things make us his willing captives. He has made our hard, sibilant language a thing of fire and air. The beauty of the visible world strikes his prismatic imagination and is dissolved into rainbow colours; the very personality of the singer melts into the song until he ceases to be a man and becomes a voice, a lyric incarnate." (*Compton-Rickett*)

This spontaneity, however, was not without labour and pain involved in 'correction' and careful workmanship and technical skill. His greatest lyrics have a coherent and logical evolution, indicative of his intellectual grasp of the emotional upsurge, but his art is always unobtrusive and even his well-wrought pieces strike us as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'.

His mastery over stanza forms, simple as well as complex, of which *Prometheus Unbound* alone accounts for thirtysix varieties, has been recognised and praised, and the ease with which mood and emotion merge with rhythm and movement of lines can be ascertained by any careful student of his 'Ode to West Wind', 'To a Skylark' and of the songs sung by characters, human and ethereal in the *Prometheus Unbound*. Cazamian has well commented on this aspect: 'The flowing ease with which the words merge into one another at the same time as the ideas they call forth join up together, goes to prove that for Shelley, the most poetical of poets, the psychological melody and the cadence of syllables, the one as spontaneous as the other, naturally formed but one music.'

As regards the contents of his poetry, which is reflective of the contradictions inherent in his nature, we have space only for two major topics—treatment of Love, and treatment of Nature. As a *poet of Love* Shelley stands in the foremost rank of the ardent apostles and singers of a sentiment which has been most fruitful source of inspiration in life as well as in literature. For him love was a heavenly passion, the essence and prime attribute of God himself, the very foundation on which the universe was resting secure. It was the silent but invisible attraction in the universe of nature and was destined to take the place of all man-made laws in golden age to come, when individuals and communities will be united together by its adamantive ties. The whole of his *Prometheus* is a triumphant celebration of the flowering of this love which has transformed the whole universe:

> Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
> Whose nature is its own divine control,
> Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
> Familiar acts are beautiful through love;

But even Plato recognized at least two varieties of love, symbolized by Urania Aphrodite or Intellectual love and Venus of the earth, who united men and women in physical love and paved the way for immortality through procreation. Shelley, however, was

entranced by the spiritual beauty of the beloved, 'devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrows', and completely forgot the body and its appetites. Proximity with the beloved stirs up his soul and sends the covering senses into a swoon, one of his favourite terms. The point has been summed up by a literary historian : 'There is a touch of elfin magic about his work; he sings of human passions, yet as one almost aloof from them, or feeling them only in some etherealised way'. No poet felt more deeply the dynamic influence of love in moulding human destiny; none realized more utterly the insignificance of life devoid of love; yet Shelley's women are merely lovely wraiths that greet us to the strains of lovely music. For instance take the picture of Emilia Viviani :

> She where she stands ! a mortal shape indeed
> With love and life and light and deity;
> An image of some bright eternity
> A shadow of some golden dream.

In comparison with this picture of a mortal woman, even the dazzling transformation of Asia in *Prometheus* looks tame in as much as Asia is an immortal, the image of spiritual beauty.

Shelley's admired women lack flesh and blood, the feelings and sentiments which are "human nature's daily food". He turns bodies into spirits 'by sublimation strange', and explodes matter, 'the brute, irrational world' with his ethereal touch, setting his readers free from the grossness of the solid flesh in an effort to convert them into light and disembodid beings :

> I loved I know not what—but
> This low sphere,
> And all that it contains, contains not thee.
> Thou whom, seen no where, I see everywhere.
> From heaven and earth, and all that in them are,
> Veiled art thou, like a star.

A critic has aptly remarked : "He never followed his emotions through into the way of full lust or firm devotion, either in his life or in his poetry. Properly his love is neither a flame nor an angel, but a daemon of the cloud region. It is not a harmony of diverse realities, but a distillation from them; a mingling of emotions so vapour-like that they seem to blend into one. Its finest voice is the melodious wraith, so to speak of love's full harmony :

> The Fountains mingle with the River
> And the Rivers with the ocean,
> The winds of Heaven mix for ever,
> With a sweet emotion.

In the *Prometheus Unbound* we have examples of this tender, pure, refined and almost angelic kind of love in a variety of forms and manifestations. There is the innocent filial devotion of the Spirit of the Earth for Asia, whom he calls 'mother' and from the

light in whose eyes he imbibes life and vitality as a mortal child gets sustenance from the milk of its mother's breast. And Asia talks of the love and union between this spirit and his sister, the Spirit of the Moon. The latter is at last smitten with love for her strong brother and pours her devotion in pure lyrical stains, innocently romantic :

I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side.

Her brother responds to her tender strains, as follows:

O, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

Equally pure but more passionate and ecstatic is the love of mother Earth for her Titan son just liberated from his chain which cost her so much woe. His touch thrills her heart :

Thy lips are on me and their touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
And through my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down.

At the top comes the love between Prometheus and Asia, pure, intense and hearfelt, but quite innocent of the flesh. Towards the close of the first Act Prometheus expresses his yearnings for Asia in accents of pure romantic fervour :

Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.

This picture of pure spiritual love is contrasted with the physical love, a burning flame of desire, between Jupiter and Thetis. The former invites her to sit beside him :

Ascend beside me, veiled in the light
Of thy desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity !
When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might !
God, spare me ! I sustain not the quick flames,
The penetrating presence; all my being is dissolved
Sinking through its foundations.

No wonder if the fruit of this hot union proves destructive of its parent.

As a poet of love Shelley stands at the opposite pole from the sensuous Keats.

Poet of Nature

The staple of romantic poetry is love of nature, 'the mighty world of eye and ear', as Wordsworth put it, and all the poets of the age have this love as a common trait of thier poetry. Among them Shelley occupies a place quite worthy of his unique personality, with its insatiable curiosity for hidden mystery, his mythopoeic imagination, his ethereal touch and his natural kinship with the world of spirits and with the phantoms of his dream.

Nature, to his view, was animate, full of life, movement and energy; peopled with spirits and quick-glancing forms, and operations, strange and mysterious, which fully sanctioned his revolutionary and utopian dreams.

The in-dwelling spirit, which was wisdom for Wordsworth, assumed the form of love for Shelley, though, at times, he was inclined to feel that 'the awful shadow' of heavenly love was visiting this planet with inconstant wings.

His keen gaze penetrated below kaleidoscopic panorama of nature into her very Spirit in search of her 'naked loveliness', and the plastic stress of that spirit's primal operation which was pressing and dissolving the unwilling earthly objects to transform them into heavenly forms and beauty. The law of change in Nature whch made the spring to follow inevitably at the heels of winter, gave impetus to his prophetic hope that the primordial power of Nature is necessarily and inevitably moving from death to life, and from life to eternity. In *Prometheus Unbound* this law is symbolised by Demogorgon, negatively a destroyer of Evil, but positively a potential form of Love. In *Queen Male* this power is addressed. as *Necessity*:

> Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,
> Of which your earth is one, is wide diffused
> A spirit of activity and life,
> That knows no term, cessation, or decay;
> That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,
> Is extinguished in the dampness of the grave,
> Spirit of nature ! all-sufficing power,
> Necessity ! thou mother of the world.

The lines have a Wordsworthian ring about them and Shelley betrays the influence of his great predecessor in poems like *Alastor* and *Mont Blanc*, and numerous passages descriptive of the sublime aspects of nature. He, however, finds no spiritual consolation from nature, nor does he enter into a habitual communion with her. He generally craves identification with her power and tameless energy to replenish his enfeebled heart. He has recorded about the genesis of

his *Prometheus Unbound*, that 'the bright blue sky of Rome and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it dominates the spirit even to intoxication were the inspiration of this drama'. In the ode 'To West Wind' he prays to the wild wind :

> Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is;
> What if my leaves are falling like its own !
> Be thou me, impetuous one.

This interpenetration of the poet's mind and the powers of nature facilitates the symbolization of the natural forms and forces which Shelley frequently attempts. Thus, Wild West Wind becomes the symbol of Shelleyan revolution, a destroyer and preserver, which chariots the winged seeds into their wintry bed to lie like corpses in their graves till the wind of spring blows its trumpet to rouse them back into life and fill the valley, plain and hill with living hues and incense sweet. Similarly, the skylark is the symbol of that ideal happiness, the dream of mortal man, which is free from the shadow of languor, annoyance and sad satiety of love, as well as the haunting fear of death.

It also explains the working of that mythopoeic imagination, which Shelley shares with Keats, though the nature-myths created by him have the peculiar light and glow emanating from his own imagination. The following picture of winter is in the best Keatsian manner:

> For winter came: the wind was his whip;
> One choppy finger was on his lip;
> He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
> And they clanked at his girdle like manacles.
> His breath was a chain which without sound.
> The earth and the air and the water bound.
>
> The Sensitive Plant.

In this connection we may also glance at his habit of weaving scientific facts and interpretation of nature into the texture of poetry in living and concrete forms. He has been described by Prof. Carl Garbo as a 'Newton among poets', and many of his epithets and images of the cloud scenery are now shown to have been drawn from the scientific accounts, the old as well as the new. The obscure images in his *Prometheus Unbound* have been interpreted as vivifications of the dazzling play of lightning and electrical vibrations in the atmosphere, and the strange, seldom noticed operations of forces in the upper regions of the air.

Competent observers have compared him to Turner as a landscape painter. His imagination dwells upon the pomp and splendour of evening skies, the winds and the changeful glories of atmospheric effects, the terror of tempests—those rare and more awful manifestations of nature, when she puts on a supernatural grandeur, and seems, indeed, to be alive, a spirit of strength, whose rainbow captivates us and whose half-dreadful charms inspire and subdue us.

His nature is in constant motion, and he has recaptured in words, light and appropriate, this movement in all its varying degrees, from gentle and wavering to sweeping and tempestuous. But over all this 'vast, dim fabric, hanging screen-like about us, every thread of which is incessantly moving', there is spread the dimness or golden mist of dream, and it is quite significant that Shelley has a peculiar attraction for vapour and mist, symbol of the visionary glory :

> Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb
> Where far over the world those vapours roll,
> Which blend two restless frames in one reposing song,
> It is the shadow that doth float unseen,
> But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality.

Many of his descriptive passages, in *Prometheus Unbound* as in other poems, present elaborate pictures of dream landscape, and even those which are composed of scenes actually, observed by him in Alpine regions, such as the scenes through which Panthea and Asia pass on their way to the Cave of Demogorgon are clothed in the elfin light, ethereal and dreamy, rather than earthly and real. G. H. Lewes, in an early review of Shelley's poetry (1841) has described this aspect with penetrating felicity: "It has the effect of dreaminess as one who has basked in the sun with eyes closed in some lonely spot and, on opening them, looks around and all seem unreal, a dim dreary haze is spread between the scene and the observer".

His Poetic Style

Prof. B. Ifar Evans has aptly remarked about the poetic style of Shelley that 'his lyrics were composed in a language whose effects had not been previously found in verse. The intangible and evanescent seem captured in verse through a vocabulary which has an indescribable lightness, absolutely untouched by the solid elements of earth.'

Shelley may be shrill and rhetorical. stun us with his torrential eloquence and excessive volubility, heaping image upon image on the slender frame of his half-buried thought, but he never muddles the pure current of his style with archaism, latinism or any kind of far-fetched and curiously and laboriously contrived phrases, and artificial flowers of rhetoric. In the diction of *Prometheus Unbound*, for example, the only peculiarity one can easily find in the frequent use of compound epithets, for which he had good sanction in Homer and in Aeschylus himself whose play be adapted to his purpose in his lyrical drama.

In purity and lightness of diction Shelley's poetry is more allied to music than to any other art; the epithets are mostly conventional opaque, lacking density and concrete outline, and seldom restrain the attention in its onward movement. Words melt into words, images and forms dissolve and mix together and the whole effect is that of a bright phantasmagoria or fabric of vision that floats before our

dreamy half-shut eyes. When the procession has gone by and the tumult of it is over, not a trace of any distinct conception lingers in the memory. At least we experience 'angelic music live with pantic thoughts, a flooding summer burst of poetry.' He has written a sheaf of light lyrics also where the language is simple, pure and limpid, the imagery subdued, and music poignant but slow-footed, bu it is not his characteristic manner.

The richness and exuberance of imagery in his poetry is almost self-evident and so is his sheer delight in pouring out all his treasures, even at the cost of repetition and monotony, till the reader is cloyed with too much sweet. These images are in perfect keeping with the phantom thoughts they are intended to clothe and decorate. Mist, cloud, wind, air, fire and fountains, glittering dew drops, thunder and lightning, snow and avalanche, stars and meteors are the elements which compose them. But the element most dominant is light, and its opposite, darkness, which become the symbols of life and eternity on the one hand and death and ignorance on the other. Shelley has been described as the poet of light *par excellence*, and for him the earthly life is only a faint copy of the Divine 'light whose smile kindles the universe'. His poems of hope and ecstatic love, *Epipsy Chidion* and *Prometheus Unbound* are verily drenched in the splendour of light. We quote below a single and well-known passage to support this point. It is the transformation of Asia which has filled her sister, Panthea, with amazed rapture:

> Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning
> Through the vest which seems to hide them,
> As the radiant lines of morning
> Through the clouds, ere they divide them;
> And this atmosphere divinest.
> Shrouds thee wheresoe'er those shinest.

Shelley's universe being fluid and flowing, where things are mixing and intertwining, his poetry naturally abounds in the images of 'web', 'maze', 'mosaic', pattern of light and shade etc. His high soaring followed by a steep fall is expressed in such images as—'wing', 'quiver', 'soar', 'fly', alternating with panting, fainting, sinking etc. The flight, speed and swift motion are often obstructed by obstacles which must be passed through—hence, the images of force and penetration, of torture, of things shattered, forked, jagged and torn asunder. As a poet of revolution or sudden transformation he loves images indicative of quick changes—dormant seeds, like the dead bodies in their graves, suddenly springing into life at the trumpet call of the spring wind; the lyre awakened suddenly into musical vibrations by gusts of wind; the accumulated snow suddenly melting and rushing down in avalanche; the snake casting off its old skin or men and women after the fall of Jupiter discarding the ugly masks of evil. The idea of mutability and slow decay evoke the images of corpses rotting in the charnel-house or slowly consumed by worms, and creeping dissolution eroding into old buildings like fire slowly

eating into the heart of wood There are images of acute sensation; music and odour overpower the senses. The winds which deflower the rose become faint and heavy winged with too much sweet.

Similarly, heat 'clings like burning gold round thy dissolving brain', and 'crawling glaciers fierce me with their spears'; the song of the skylark is 'a clear, keen, joyance and 'keen as are the arrows of that silver sphere'. Shelley is fond of kneading light, odour, sound, motion into a fabric of shot-silk :

Its music long,
Like woven sounds, of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.

These lines are a fine illustration of Shelley's power of grasping the evanescent, obscure and unsubstantial impressions and 'reinforcing his airy pageans with threads of steel, as R. H. Fogle has aptly put it.

Among his favourite symbols some are conventional and philosophical, such as cave, boat, bark and ship (for the soul); ocean (world, eternity); veil, painted curtain, dome or tower of many colours (mundanc life of illusions which hide spiritual realities; Snake and Eagle (for good and evil); scorpion which stings itself to death is a fit symbol of self-destructive evil. Then there is 'lamp' for spiritual potency and illumination; 'well for the depth of the soul, together with mirror, fountain, aeolian lyre, dew and coal on the hearth, supported by the Romantic symbols of 'breath' and 'breeze' for inspiration.

Shelley and His Critics

Shelley's poetry has evoked most ardent enthusiasm in some readers and equally powerful repulsion in others; and quite a few persons, who are inspired by his poetry in their youth, react violently against it as they settle down to sober realities and mundane concerns in their mature years. This was the case with T. S. Eliot. The sum and substance of the main criticism of his poetry can be found in the well-known description of the poet given by the critical pen of Mathew Arnold, the Victorian critic, 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.' In more sober prose he singled out, as points of weakness, 'an incurable want, in general, of a sound subject matter and the incurable fault, in consequence of unsubstantiability'. Other references characterise him as sad, evanescent, lovely musical, inarticulate, incoherent and immature with his many-coloured haze of words and images 'remarkable for their vaporousness'. The later critics including T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis have practically repeated this criticism in a different language.

Shelley cannot be completely absolved from a habitual tendency towards volubility and bewildering exuberance of language and imagery and repetition of favourite epithets and symbols. Even his admirers have to concede that he is given to excessive self-pity and occasional abandonment to weak sentimentalism and volatile enthusiasm, kindled rather by ideas with no support of a sympathetic knowledge of concrete humanity, born of close contact. But when fullest possible allowance has been made for all these and allied limitations of his nature and art the student of his poetry will find it hard to subscribe to the charge of unsubstantiallty and ineffectualness.

The difficulty with the bulk of criticism directed against Shelley lies in the application of a standard which is not valid in respect of his poetry. If by poetry we mean, as Arnold did, something exclusively concerned with real men and women and their problems, temporary and permanent, presented in a language where every word is clear-cut and definite and every image is concrete and solid and the whole organized into a logical unity born of the severe subordination of details to the effectiveness of the whole, then the poetry of Shelley quite obviously stands condemned. He himself made a candid confession that he did not deal in flesh and blood. He was a visionary intoxicated by the noble ideas of Love, Beauty, Freedom, Justice and the vision of the golden age when all these will become concrete realities on this earth, transforming it into heaven. His poetry is naturally peopled with vivid abstractions and phantoms and forms of the spirit and dream worlds, which were more familiar to him than the earthly scenes and creatures. He strips the many-coloured veil of the world to gaze upon the naked loveliness of nature, the realities of the heaven and the mysterious operations going on in the dark depths of the earth and the sky. His ethereal imagination playing upon the familiar objects and real human beings transforms them into unsubstantial visions freed from the laws of the earth and the fetters of the flesh. His language is unsubstantial and vague because his dreams are lofty and dim. It is a poetry of a different kind altogether, but a poetry by no means less noble and inspiring than any other kind, because it deals with visions and ideals which have always constitued the highest good for the human endeavour, and noblest inspiration for human sacrifice. Amid all the cloud and visionary haze in which his language is clothed and all the apparent incoherence born of his boundless enthusiasm, his message sounds clear and coherent, in the moving lines quoted below :

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent,
> This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be

Good, Great and Joyous, beautiful and free
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

Thus with all his limitations the positive side of his poetry and "his creed remains precious, not because it was logical or scientific or coherent, but because is was an ideal, fervently felt and penetrated with the whole life-force of an incomparable nature. The poet who creates a new ideal, and fills men's hearts with the flame of a divine desire, is a practical force in the stream of human development, and this Shelley has done". Much of his poetry is filled with the tender melancholy of moon light he loved, that the world is still half blind to highest bardic character, the poet of a spiritual dawn, the eager spirit who flies forward, 'calling the lapsed soul/And weeping in the morning dew'.

But even his moon seems to reflect the beams of yet unrisen sun; and his sun-light has all the ethereal exhilaration of that of the first hours of a glorious day. So speaks Todhunter about Shelley, the prophetic singer of Millennium. But what this picture omits is the painful fact that very often the prophetic garb was laid aside and trumpet notes yielded place to the wail of a weak child, which an unsympathetic critic has described as:

'His cry is like the infinite inarticulate wailing of forsaken infants'. His 'luminous wings' were often caught in 'the blood and mire' and then he cried helplessly:

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

That such a frail creature had a soul invincible, and heaven-high dreams and desires is in itself a precious tribute to the grandeur of human nature.

CHAPTER TWO

Prometheus Unbound : An Analysis

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND is Shelley's most characteristic and musical masterpiece, where the essence of his thoughts and dreams is concentrated and the well-known story of the brave Titan, supplied by Greek mythology through Aeschylus, the favourite Greek tragedian of our poet, is transformed into a symphony of Millennium, chanted by a myriad-throated chorus. In the Preface to this lyrical drama the poet refers to the practice of the masters of Greek tragedy who 'employed a certain arbitrary discretion in their treatment of mythology and national history'. We shall, therefore, first give the outline of the original fable of Prometheus and then refer to its treatment by Aeschylus, father of Greek tragedy, in his play, *Prometheus Vinctus* (Bound) and lastly elaborate the points of similarity and dissimilarity between this Greek model and the lyrical drama of Shelley.

We give the original fable in the words of Profes or John Stuart Blackie, 'Scotland's greatest Greek Scholar':—"In the mythology of ancient Greeks, as of many other nations, we find the earlier periods characterised by a series of terrible mundane struggles—wars in heaven and wars on earth, which serve as an introduction to, and a preparation for the more regularly ordered and the more permanent dynasty that utlimately sways the sceptre of Olympus. In the theological poem of Heriod, *Theogony*, as in the prose narration of Apollodorus, Heaven and Earth are represented as the rulers of the first celestial dynasty; their offspring, called Titans, in the person of one of their number, Kronos, by a violent act of dethronement, forms a second dynasty; while, he in his turn, after a no less violent struggle, gives place to a third sceptre—viz, that of Jove—who, in the faith of the orthodox Athenian, was the supreme rulet of the worlds of gods and men, now, after many throes and struggles, arrived at its normal state not hence forward to be disturbed.

Among the persons most prominent in that primeval age of strife and gigantic wars stands Prometheus; not, however, like his Titan brethren in character, though identical with them in descent; and in the position which he finally assumed towards the god (Jupiter) in whose hands the supreme government of the world finally remained. Prometheus, as his name denotes (the Provident), strives against the high authority of Jove, not by that 'reasonless force' which falls by its own weight but by intelligence and cunning. Viewed in this char-

acter, he was the natural ally, not of the serpent-footed giants and the flame-breathing Typhone, but of the All-wise Olympian (Zeus or Jove or Jupiter.) He was wise, nay, benovolent; his delight was to exercise his high intellect in the elevation of the infant human race, sunk in a state of almost brutish stupidity; he stood forward as an incarnation of practical intellect which subjects the rude elements of nature, for human use and convenience. Unmindful of the command and law of Jove he stole fire from heaven and initiated mankind into the secrets of minerals which resulted in the development of the mechanical art.

This shows that with all his virtues he was proud like Lucifer and aspired to be the lord of the human world. The result was his fall, his torture and confinement, and, according to one version, his eventual reconciliation with Jove, who multiplies his woes as the bound Titan refuses to disclose the secret concerning the danger hanging over the security of his sceptre.

In the faith of an orthodox Athenian Prometheus was not the less worthy of his any chains because he defied the will of Jove 'in the championship of mankind. Neither god nor man can question or impugn the divine decree of supreme Jove on grounds of expediency or propriety. With the will of Zeus; as with the laws of nature there is no arguing.

Different Handlings of the Myth by Aeschylus and Shelley

The myth of Prometheus was taken over by Aeschylus, father of Greek tragedy, who must have perceived the three major parts of this story—the fire stealing, the martyrdom of the Titan for his services to mankind, and the final compromise and reconciliation with Jupiter which brought about his unbinding at the hands of Hercules. It is believed that Aeschylus composed three inter-connected plays or triology to dramatise the whole story, but only the central piece of the composite work, *Prometheus Vinctus*, has come down to us, and it is this play, which gave the impetus to Shelley for the composition of his lyrical drama in four acts, the *Prometheus Unbound*.

Shelley was attracted to Aeschylus by virtue of certain qualities in him which may be described as Shelleyan in his bold and lofty imagination, his love of the sublime and terrible aspects of nature, his uncommon lyrical power, his grand style and, above all, his spirit of free inquiry which mixes a critical septicism about orthodox religiosity with a profoundly religious atmosphere which pervades his great plays. In his *Prometheus Vinctus* there is an ambivalent attitude towards Jupiter clearly reflected in the chants of the chorus, a sense of awe towards the supreme ruler of the universe, blended with an unmistakable sympathy for the suffering saviour of mankind, which breaks out in clear references to the cruelty and injustice of the omnipotent Olympian.

Yet for Shelley, the uncompromising revolutionary, the

capitulation of Prometheus, the invisible champion of human race to the omnipotent tyranny of divine despot was too hard a fact to swallow, so he altered the catastrophe and made the Titan triumphant over his 'wicked' tyrant.

In the Preface to the play he himself has explained the whole problem : "*The Prometheus Unbound* of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the commutation of the marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules......I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and the endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his hig language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary"

In the light of this peculiar moral bias which points the final victory of Good over Evil, the principal characters had to be altered. Prometheus, while retaining his heroic stature and invincibility of spirit, becomes 'the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends'. The exaltation of the Champion necessitated the degradation of Jupiter who becomes a type of moral wickedness, not only an image of the omnipotent tyrant of Orthodox religion, whose authority rests upon superstition and fear of hell, but the fountain head of all kinds of tyranny, political, social and intellectual which enslave the human soul, disfigure human nature and convert the green earth into a wide hecatomb, loaded with groaning victims, writhing in the extreme agony of body and mind.

Moreover, the original Greek play accounts for the first act only of Shelley's lyrical drama, at the end of which he spreads his wings and rushes towards the Millennium in the offing, chanting the gushing songs of radiant hope and unclouded joy. Shelley's lyrical drama, therefore, is not a mere interpretation of the old myth, but rather the re-creation of a new one, on the basis of certain materials supplied by the Greek play by Aeschylus. Shelley himself has frankly admitted the fact : "My *Prometheus* is, in my judgement, of higher character than anything I have yet attempted, and is perhaps less of an imitation of anything that has gone before it. It has no resemblance to Greek drama; it is original and cost me several labour."

Even in the first Act of the lyrical drama where Shelley is very close to his Greek original the process of change is visible amid numerous points of similarity. We shall hurriedly enumerate these points of resemblance and the alterations which Shelley's has made to adapt the myth to his peculiar purpose. The setting in Shelley:

'This wall of eagle baffling mountain, black, wintry, dead, unmeasured, resembles the sublime and terrible setting in Aeschylus. The pain and torture, the reference to the winged bound and the Titan's call to earth and heaven against the tyranny of Jupiter, the omnipotent oppressor, are in the spirit of the original, only Shelley's Prometheus is more outspoken and elaborate in the description of the nature of Jupiter as well as the account of the torture to which he has been subjected. But the iron chains of the original have been replaced by the crawling glaciers that pierce him like spears and their bright chains that eat with their burning cold into his bones. The Titan himself is Aeschylean in his grandeur, his defiance and the invincibility of his soul, which has enabled him to triumph over his suffering. He knows, like his Greek counterpart, that the destined hour will come to release him from his chains, and secretly rejoices at his knowledge of the danger which threatens the rule of the tyrant in heaven. But while the Titan in Aeschylus remains unchanged in his implacable detestation of Jupiter and all the epicurean gods around him, Shelley's champion has been spiritually transformed by his suffering, and confesses......

I hate no more
As then, ere misery made me wise.

Unlike the Greek hero he has forgotten his curse and is anxious to hear the exact words he employed while uttering it. And, at long last, when he hears them, he exclaims :

'It doth repent me : words are quick and vain;
Grief for a while is blind, and so was mine,
I wish no living thing so suffer pain.'

Suffering has made the Shelleyan champion almost a Christ-like figure, patient, forgiving and pitiful.

In Aeschylus the bound Titan is visited by the oceanides who form the sympathetic chorus. They seek to console him and in their own timid way they refer to the injustice and tyranny of Jupiter, which Shelley has put in the mouth of the Titan himself, so that the protest against the omnipotent olympian is more fearless and outspoken in his play than in the Greek original. In Shelley the oceanides are replaced by Panthea and Ione, sisters of Asia who sit at the feet of Prometheus and occasionally talk about the visions and events, but, for the most part, they watch the suffering Titan in silent sympathy. The real Chorus is the Earth, mother of the Titan who suffers with him and suggests the way of making the repetition of his curse possible. The Earth is joined by the Spirits and Voices in the air which respond to the moods of the Titan and try to cheer him. In this way Shelley's play becomes a cosmic drama in which the whole universe is involved in the fate of the bound rebel against the divine despotism.

Again, in the Greek play Prometheus himself gives an account of the benefits he did to the benighted humanity and arts and crafts

he taught man to subdue the elements to his will. Shelley has placed this in the mouth of Asia, in the second Act, who is speaking to Demogorgon about the 'faithless faith' of the ungrateful Jupiter. This change is dramatically important in as much as it is directed towards the realization of a desired end, which is to enlist the alliance of the mysterious power in her mission of overthrowing the tyranny of Jupiter and liberating her heroic consort, whose bondage has sent her into exile.

In Aeschylus largest space is devoted to the talk between Prometheus and Io, the persecuted victim of Jove's lust whose destined wanderings are described by the Titan elaborately and graphically. Shelley has rightly omitted the whole episode as unnecessary and irrelevant to his purpose. In the Greek original three gods come to the Titan one after another, with different attitudes towards him. The first of them is Hephaesthus, who comes to chain him to the Caucasus, but expresses genuine sympathy for a fellow god whom it is his painful duty to rivet to the icy rocks. Then comes the Ocean god, a mealy-mouthed opportunist who wastes his persuasion upon the Titan in the interest of a more prudent behaviour. Last comes Mercury, a taunting, supercilious messenger of Jupiter who sternly warns him against his wrong-headed refusal to reveal the secret about the event likely to end the rule of the reigning Olympian. Shelley has reduced this number to Mercury alone, who differs here radically from his Greek namesake. Here he is compounded of the mournful sympathy of Hephaesthus and seeming friendliness of the prudent, timid, time-serving ocean god, with a touch of the Greek Mercury in his parting advice to clothe his secret in words, bend his soul in prayer like a suppliant in some gorgeous temple and by his meek submission soften the fierceness of his Almighty Judge. The Furies he brings with him have no precedent in the original; but they resemble the winged bounds, with snaky locks and black faces, rising from the depth of hell and running with ravenous intoxication on the trial of their victims, which the Greek dramatist introduces in his *Eumenides*, the last play of his only extant triology. But in Shelley they are less concrete and more shadowy and vague, and their sharpest torture is mental rather than physical, as the third Fury threatens :

> We will be dread thought beneath thy brain
> And foul desire round thy astonished heart,
> And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
> Crawling like agony.

From this point as in the play Shelley roars up into his own golden ether leaving the solid base of Aeschylus and the Greek myth on the earth. The second Act introduces Asia, who is barely mentioned by Aeschylus, as the daughter of Ocean and the wife of Prometheus, but in Shelley she becomes the embodiment of Love, an active agent in the process leading to the overthrow of Jupiter, liberation of Prometheus and the advent of Millennium.

Thus, out of the hints supplied by Aeschylus Shelley composed a musical drama of universal regeneration and advent of the happy golden age, which was composed under the spring sky of Rome: "The bright blue sky of Rome," says the poet in the Preface to the play, "and the effects of the vigorous awakening of spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirit even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama." No wonder, therefore, that the whole play is bathed in the light, music and divine breath of a new, vigorous and lusty birth of the spirit out of the dead bones of the dreaming humanity.

CHAPTER THREE

Synopsis of the Play

ACT I

THE play opens with a long speech addressed to Jupiter, the omnipotent ruler, by Prometheus, the saviour of mankind, who is shown bound to the bleak walls of snow in a vale of Indian Caucasus, where he has lain for three thousand years in sleepless torture, which is witnessed by Panthea and Ione, sisters his consort Asia, living in exile in a remote Indian vale, and Earth, his mother and Air, ocean and mountains. The speech describes Jupiter as a living embodiment of all types of tyranny, religious, political, social and intellectual. The vivid description of the instruments of torture brings into bolder relief the strength and invincibility of the Titan's soul, who derives consolation from his knowledge that when the destined hour arrives the Tyrant will be pushed from his throne and will stand before him as a meek suppliant. So he pities him and abjures his hate. He would fain hear the words of his curse that he pronounced upon Jupiter ere misery had made him wiser and more forbearing. With the advice of his mother, Earth, he raises the Phantom of Jupiter himself to repeat the words of his curse, and on hearing them he repents the blindness of his hate which led him to utter the curse. But now he would wish no body to suffer.

While the Earth and her creatures feel miserable to think that the brave Titan has submitted to tyranny, the sky is darkened by the horde of Furies, black, midnight hags, led by Mercury, the son and messenger of Jupiter who asks Titan to tell his secret concerning the future of his supremacy to the mighty Olympian, as pain of unimagined fresh torture at the hands of the Furies. The Titan rejects his proposal contemptuously and sends Mercury flying, crest-fallen, back to Olympus. The Furies now proceed, with infernal elation, to torture the proud Titan mentally. They unroll before his troubled eyes two visions indicative of the miserable failure of goodness and final triumph of wickedness and tyranny. The first vision presents the good and gentle Christ on the bloody cron who preached a religion which has turned out to be a perpetual source of tyranny, persecution, strife and bloody wars, with plunder, slaughter and burning of cities, too painful and degrading to contemplate.

The second vision relates to the French revolution when a host of people marched against the citadels of tyranny under the banner of Truth, Liberty and Love.

Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: There was strife, deceit and fear;
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.

The Titan is broken but refuses to bend and the Furies depart. Earth now summons a number of spirits to console the dejected Titan with their cheering songs, which however, fail to lift his depression. He longs for his beloved Asia and Panthea rises up to fly to the abode of her sister through 'the golden lightning' of the rising sun.

ACT II

The act opens in the Indian vale with Asia standing under the morning sky of young spring, anxiously awaiting the expected arrival of her sister, Panthea, who appears before her at long last and attributes her delay to her tardy wings overburdened with he excessive joy caused by her latest dream. In her dream she saw the Titan transformed into a radiant shape 'the over-powering light of which was shadowed over with love, steaming forth like vaporous fire from his flowing limbs. As they stand talking and comparing notes the atmosphere begins to resound with the inviting sounds of 'follow, follow' and the two sisters start in pursuit of the luring voices which call upon them to pursue their course through woods and mountains into the dark hollow till they come to the dark throne under which doom lies coiled like a serpent which they have to untie to put the dark power into operation. They reach the cave of Demogorgon, the dread power, and find his throne occupied by 'a mighty darkness, neither limb, - nor form nor outline. Yet a living spirit.

He talks in riddles and dark conceits, but this much is clear that all things are subject to time, change and chance but love is eternal. Asia being the incarnation of Love, gets strength from this remark and realizes the power and potency implicit in her. As soon as this realization comes to her the Destined Hour arrives with his dark chariot and the dark figure of Demogorgon leaves the throne vacant to drive to the royal seat of Jupiter. Meanwhile the second car, bright, radiant and lovely, takes the sisters through the clouds to the place of the Titan's martyrdom. As they drive forward through the golden dawn Panthea is amazed to see a sudden transformation of Asia, now clothed in her native splendour as she was at the time of her birth at sea. She is dazzled and bursts into a lyrical cry:

Child of Light, thy limbs are burning
Through the rest that seems to hide them;
As the radians lines of morning
Through the clouds, ere they divide them;

And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoever thou shinest.

ACT III

The action now shifts to the court of mighty Jupiter, sitting exalted on his throne with his glittering bride, Thetis, and assemblage of obsequious gods besides him. Blind of the doom impending over his head, he rejoices in his possession of glory and omnipotence, which, however, has not yet been able to subdue completely the proud soul of man, the victim of his wrath. But no spark of opposition is likely to survive the birth of his offspring, a terror of the earth, who is to appear soon, 'armed with the dreadful might of ever-living links from the vacant throne of Demogorgon'.

The atmosphere of joy and universal exultation is abruptly shattered by the sudden entry of the awful figure of Demogorgon, with his dictatorial fiat to secretly quailing Jupiter :

I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness.

Jupiter rises only to sink with him on the dark wave of ruin, 'even as a vulture and a snake outspent, twisted in inextricable fight'.

After the fall of Jupiter, Hercules, the mythical unbinder, releases the Titan and explains the meaning of the service he has rendered him:

Most glorious among
Spirits ! thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, long suffering love,
And thee, who are the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

The liberated Titan and family are now driven to the cave, their new abode, to live in bliss, by the spirit of the Earth, while the Destined Hour is deputed to blow the mystic couch-shell, wedding-gift to Asia presented by Proteus. A new wave of joy and beauty has swept through land, sea and sky, while the spirit of the Earth and the Destined Hour present to Asia and Panthea, glowing pictures of regenerated humanity, freed from the tyranny of all kinds, and shining in its native splendour unobstructed by the crust of hypocrisy, hate, corruption and cowardice.

ACT IV

The last Act is a myriad-throated paean of victory and joy raised by Earth, heaven and spirits of the air, to greet the advent of Millennium. As Panthea and Ione get up in the morning in their earthly paradise they are greeted by melodies of diverse kinds raised by spirits of several order, by the Earth and Moon, and the symphony ends with the trumpted note of Demogorgon, which commends a spiritual remedy against the 'Doom' which time may unleash in the course of its revolution:

> To suffer woes, which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs, darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems to be omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

CHAPTER FOUR

Prometheus Unbound as a Lyrical Drama

PROFESSOR BLACKIE has described the tragedies of Aeschylus as 'Lyrical dramas' because the lyrical element in them preponderates over the dramatic one. Even then, it should not be forgotten that the lyrical element is closely related to the dramatic action, and the play itself is rooted in a solid story or set of situations, concrete and living figures and exciting conflict, physical or intellectual. When Shelley called his *Prometheus Unbound* a lyrical drama he had perhaps the plays of Aeschylus in mind, but his play is not dramatic in the accepted sense of the term. For what we are accustomed to call a drama arises from the conflict between two parties of characters which impress us as living human beings like ourselves so that we sympathise with their feelings and their endeavours. As the story advances through its inner logic, the conflict becomes sharper, the motives clearer, the figures more vivid and vital and the interest mounts in intensity through suspense which is resolved only at the end of the play. We are witnessing a human action, based on human responsibility and human effort which tend gradually to unravel the mystery of human nature. Even where supernatural agency or the decree of fate is assigned a role, slight or serious, it should not be allowed to eliminate human initiative, even though it may miscarry in its sequel and compel the human agent to cry, 'our thoughts are ours, but their ends none of our own'.

With these ideas in mind if we examine the lyrical drama of Shelley, we shall have little difficulty in concluding that it is a phantom of drama, not a real specimen of it. It deals with the story of the bound Titan who will be unbound in the end, but before that happy consummation the omnipotent tyrant must be opposed and dethroned by persons and forces on the side of the bound saviour of mankind, who is not only unable to act himself but whose conviction that the tyrant is doomed to an abject vanquishment at the destined hour robs the action of all suspense and eliminates human responsibility and the effectiveness of human effort.

The movement of action does not depend on the law of cause and effect or the law of probability or necessity; it is sudden or automatic and rests upon the working of destiny. When the destined moment has come Asia becomes active, and the impulse behind her activity is not her own free will, but a mysterious agency which

calls upon her to follow the voice in the air and pursue her journey till she reaches the cave of Demogorgon, a dark, dreaded power, who answers her questions and suddenly cries, 'behold'. She lifts her eyes and sees the dark car of the Destined Hour which will take the dread deity to Jupiter, for what we expect to be an exciting and fierce combat, because the description of the mighty despot and his own bombastic boasts have prepared us for it. But our expectation is deflated when we find that the omnipotent victor is really a hollow sham whom the mere frown of Demogorgon shrivels up and dissolves into nothingness.

So far as characters are concerned they are partly spirits and voices, partly unearthly creatures like the Furies or figures half-human and half-symbolic like Prometheus, Asia, Jupiter and Panthea along with her sister, Ione. They, therefore, neither develop nor follow the law or the logic operative in the human world. The whole movement ends in the unbinding of the Titan, who in a manner, technically describable as an anti-climax, retires, with his family into his arcadian cave simply to smile or weep over the songs sung to him, or to contemplate, with delight the visions of the lovely forms, created by human poets, painters and sculptors by virtue of their deeper and clearer insight resulting from their increased perfection. Considered in this light the play actually ends here and the entire fourth Act becomes superfluous. A critic has passed this verdict in words as clear as they are emphatic: "When Shelley unbinds his Prometheus, his drama falls out to bits, and his stage becomes a chaos. The real actors are crowded out of it, while portions of the scenery, the full orchestra, and the flashing lights make the glorious havoc of the whole—till at length Demogorgon restores order—and dramatic harmony—with his sublime perforation, and the curtain falls." (*Campbell*).

But there is another approach possible to the play, better calculated to discover a coherence in it and justify the addition of the last act, which Shelley made a couple of months later after he had finished a more coherent piece in three acts. The approach is indicated by the poet himself in the concluding paragraph where he confesses that he has 'a passion for reforming the world which, however, does not mean a 'direct enforcement of reform' ; didactic poetry being his abhorrence : "My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select class of poetical readers with beautiful idealism of moral excellence" so that it may love, and admire, and trust, and hope and endure.

Considered in this light the focus of attention is not Prometheus or his story, but the golden age or Millennium, which follows the overthrow of tyranny ; and the transformation it effects in human nature, in the human world and the whole universe which has awaited its coming in agonised suspense. The play is a cosmic drama of regeneration, which deals with the process leading to the end of the old order and the beginning of the new one. The

four Acts are the four phases of this process, and every phase is a link in the chain, while the characters, human, half-human and elemental, are simply the instruments in the realization and intensification of this process.

The first Act registers the beginning of the conquest of tyranny because three thousand years of pain and torture have left the Titan invincible in the strength of his soul and mature in wisdom, with the richness of a sympathetic and feeling heart. The coming of the Furies poses a new danger to the poise of his mind because their torture is psychological and insidious. The Titan remains unconquered, but deeply shaken, so much so that even the consolding songs of the spirits summoned by the Earth fail to lift the weight of his depression :

> All things are still; alas ! how heavily
> This quiet morning weighs upon my heart.

In his desperation he clings to the will of destiny to be the saviour of the suffering man 'or sink into the original gulf of things.' He needs an ally and remembers his beloved Asia, because all hope is vain, but love.

This naturally leads to the second phase, where Asia is roused into activity by the dream of Panthea and the voices in the air which impel her, with Panthea, love linked with faith, to pursue her journey to the dark cave of Demogorgon, who tells her categorically that all things are subject to Fate, Time, Chance and Change but eternal Love, and Asia mutters 'so much I asked before and my heart gave the response thou hast given'. Thus Love realises its strength, and the inherent weakness of Jupiter, the Tyrant—'All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil.' With this realisation the Destined Hour appears with its dark car and carries Demogorgon on his important mission to destroy the tyrant himself.

The third phase depicts the easy victory of the power of regeneration over the incarnation of tyranny and human bondage, and the victor is the Tyrant's own offspring. The meaning is that Evil is not only destructive, but also self-destructive, and it contains in its own bosom the seeds of its undoing.

The end of tyranny is followed by the liberation of the long-suffering Titan, and his conveyance to his happy arcadian retreat. He has served his purpose in the process of regeneration and we are disposed to discuss him. Attention now is fixed on the Millennium, the climax of the process towards which everything in the play has been moving. The problem of the poet is to familiarise the reader with this beautiful aspect of his idealism. Shelley naturally follows the two effective ways to bring the nature of the golden age home to his 'refined' readers. First, as the regeneration is universal it has to be presented from different points of view by characters representing all the principal spheres in the universe. Not only the sense of

universal joy, but different grounds of that joy must be conveyed to the reader. Secondly, Shelley rightly thought that a concept so ideal and vague can only be conveyed by music, which should gradually prepare the mind for the reception of an idea so remote 'from the sphere of our sorrows'. Music induces a state of trance in which the golden dreams assume the vividness and solidity of real objects.

But the speech of Demogorgon breaks that trance and brings us down to the plane of hard facts. He tells the creatures of the universe that this happy Millennium must be placed on a solid foundation to resist effectively the onslaughts of evil forces which time may unleash in future. This foundation will be formed by those virtues which the brave Titan displayed in his dauntless opposition to omnipotent tyranny. Viewed in this light the play becomes a coherent and harmonious piece, and the fourth Act a vital, necessary and integral part of it.

CHAPTER FIVE

Interpretation of the Prometheus Unbound

CRITICS have attempted to explain the allegorical significance of the principal figures in Shelley's lyrical drama—Prometheus, Jupiter, Asia, Panthea, Ione and Demogorgon. Interpretations differ widely in details, though the conclusions are almost identical. These differences underline the crucial fact that the play is not an allegory, but a myth. Allegory has only one central meaning which is embodied in several characters and the crucial events in the story; while myth admits of a diversity of meaning. In brief we may say that a myth is a complex of several allegories, and its fabric is comparable to a piece of shot silk with several shades, each shade standing for a particular meaning.

In the brief discussion that follows we shall try to pluck out the heart of mystery which still covers many details of the story, though the general outline of Shelley's argument is clear and easy to grasp.

In the first place, the play is a moral allegory of universal significance, dealing with the ever-recurring conflict between the forces of Good and Evil. The Titan, saviour and benefactor of mankind, bringer of heavenly fire to the earth and teacher of the arts of civilization to mankind, is, in Shelley's own view 'the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and truest motives to the best and noblest end'. Even Mercury tells him 'wise art thou, firm and good', while his mother Earth says, 'thou art more than God, being wise and kind'; while Jupiter, wedded to power, pomp and dignity, is a symbol of all that is evil.

His ignorance about his doom, known to the Titan in Shelley as well as in Aeschylus, signifies the blindness of evil and the impermanence of its sway, which formed the fundamental creed of Shelley. The offspring of his union with Thetis, symbol of false glory, which is destined to overthrow him in the end, symbolises the destructive principle in the heart of evil itself. Shelley has elsewhere compared evil to the scorpion which stings itself to death. Asia, on the other hand stands for the principles of beauty, love and truth, the operation of which liberates the 'good' in the universe, as divorce from it amounts to its helplessness and supine inactivity. Demogorgon, the obscure deity, mentioned by the late classical writers, by Spenser and Milton, d, also by Peacock, in his 'Rhododaphne', represents the eternal,

ever creative principle in nature which supplies a cure for all evil and is imaged as 'time-destroying infiniteness', and 'self-enshrined eternity, a destroyer and preserver, dark, formidable and awful, as a destructive power, but wearing a 'godhead's benignant grace' as a preserver and inspirer of the good and the beautiful in the universe. Shelley has underlined this fact in the description of his cave: Asia and Panthea see a cloud of 'oracular vapour rising up; from which, says the poet:

> Lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
> And call truth, love, virtue, genius, or joy,
> That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
> To deep intoxication, and uplift,
> The voice which is contagion to the world.

Secondly, the poem has an aspect of political and social allegory. Here the Titan is ideal humanity, learning wisdom through suffering, and wedded to love and beauty, an embodiment of truth, liberty, justice, endurance, hatred of evil, inextinguishable hope and inflexible determination 'never to submit or yield; while Jupiter is the symbol of tyranny, social and political, united to external splendour typified in Thetis. Demogorgon, veiled, but gifted with partial vision, symbolises human Reason, deified by the eighteenth century philosophers in England and France, which became a terrific revolutionary force with Rousseau and others when it was impregnated with love or emotion. As the child of Jupiter and Thetis, Demogorgan symbolises the Revolution born out of the tyranny of the political rulers and their priestly supporters. In its early aspect it is dark, terrible and awful like the outbreak of rebellion in France, which Dickens has described as a fierce sea-rising accompanied with tempest, smoke and flame. But its aspect changes when the evil has been destroyed and it becomes an ally of the process of the regeneration. Shelley was never prepared to accept that the flames kindled by the French Revolution would ever be extinguished despite its failure in France.

This brings us to the religious aspect of the allegory, in which Prometheus, saviour of mankind chained to the rocks, stands for Christ, symbol of true religion, imprisoned and rendered inactive by superstition and priestly order, created by his followers and symbolised in Jupiter, the Error incarnate, wedded to Thetis, the false Church. Asia with her two sisters symbolises Faith, Hope and Charity, Love and Truth which Christ embodied in himself and his followers have divorced from his religion. Demogorgon stands for the Nemesis, generated by the very arrogance of the false religion, which will ultimately destroy the corrupt faith in the human world. One may recall here the awful words of John Milton against the corrupt clergy of the Church of England in his day:

> But the two-handed engine waits to strike
> But once and strike no more.

On the intellectual plane Prometheus stands for human mind itself intrinsically wedded to the principle of light and life, embodied in Asia, who is compelled to live in isolation by the prevailing ignorance, symbolised by Jupiter, united to pride, which is Thetis. Demogorgon is the dark energy dormant in the depth of the universe, which is set in motion by the enlightened principle to destroy conceited ignorance and give free play to the higher faculties of human mind and make man master of the forces of nature and the secrets of the universe, through his power, arising from liberated knowledge.

Lastly, it is tempting to read a meaning in the poem personal to Shelley himself, which gives a sentimental touch to the picture of the liberated Titan, who retires to a happy vale with his beloved, her two sisters to fleet the time 'in careless leisure', listening to music and contemplating the lovely visions of forms wrought by the human artists of superior insight. The situation is quite similar to that in 'Epipsychidion' where the ecstatic and breathless apostrophe to Emilia as the incarnation of Beauty and Love, is followed by a personal invitation to her, his soul's sister, to soil with him to a happy Island, a rural paradise enclosed by the calm waters of an ever-placid sea, to live as his mate and bride. In his 'Ode to West Wind' he pictures himself as a tameless and impetuous spirit, chained and bowed to the earth, by the weight of the hours—that is, the brute, custom-ridden world, a replica of Jupiter. Indeed, the prominent qualities embodied in Prometheus are those which Shelley himself extolled and aspired to cultivate and possess.

The long speech of Prometheus addressed to Jupiter and the bitter and long-winded curse he uttered against that despotic God, whose throne rested on superstition and fear of hell, have many parallels in Shelley's poetry and personal letters. Similar is the case with the tirade against the followers of Christ, who have curcified him again and again with their hypocrisy, strife, bloody wars and ruthless pursuit of the good and virtuous out of sheer malice. Prometheus, indeed, becomes the mouthpiece of Shelley when he addresses the following complaints to the vision of Christ nailed to the bloody cross:

> I see, I see
> The wise, the mild, the lofty and the just
> Whom thy slaves hate being like to thee,
> Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home
> An early-chosen, late lamented home.

In this personal allegory also Asia is the symbol of Intellectual Beauty and Love, to whose worship Shelley had committed himself in early youth and whom he ardently desired to keep enthroned in his heart. Demogorgon, in this personal allegory, symbolises the eternal law of the universe under which spring necessarily follows the winter. As Demogorgon, the offspring of wicked Jupiter, destroy him to usher into being the regenerated world, in the same way this law operates in the dense world itself to change the earthly clods

into radiant things of beauty. Prometheus asks the Spirit of the Hour to take up the magic couchshell of Proteus and blow it over the sleeping world, in the same way Shelley prays to the wild west wind to be the trumpet of a new prophecy, and scatter his words, like ashes from a living hearth, among the dreaming mankind, to kindle a new birth.

Thus the alchemy of Shelley's imagination has transformed the Greek fable of the heroic Titan, put on the rack by the divine despot, for his service to poor humanity, into a new myth of univeral regeneration, which is the best illustration of his own description of the inexhaustibility of a great work of literature: "Veil after veil may be undrawan, and the inmost naked beauty of meaning never exposed. A great poem is a fountain ever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person or one age has exhausted all its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and unconceived delight". (*Defence of Poetry*)

Nature in the Prometheus Unbound

A careful examination of the various ways in which Nature has been treated by Shelley in his lyrical drama will reveal the following major points.

(a) The animation of nature through the personalization of natural objects and forces, both familiar and obscure.

(b) The rendering of the scientific facts about nature in poetic terms.

(c) Description of scenes, real and imaginary with special emphasis on the grand and solemn aspects, as the subtle changes in the sky and the atmosphere and on light and colour in their varying manifestations.

Shelley's lyrical drama has a cosmic background, where every atom of universe throbs with life, and all the objects of nature appear as living creatures. The earth, sun, moon, ocean, the constellations, the river and mountains are either instinct with life, or they have their presiding spirits and genii. Then there are spirits of the elements, tiny, light, airy, radiant creatures who are summoned or appear uninvited with their delicate songs and make the whole atmosphere musical. Shelley's play reminds us of the natural universe n classical mythology, where every object in nature had its presiding deity. Among such radiant creatures unified by the plastic and primitive imagination of Shelley the most delightful are the spirit of the Earth and the Spirit of the Hour. The former comes to Asia as a child to its mother, and she tells it of another kid of love which will develop between it and its sister, the spirit of the moon, and their union will fill the air with their bright, winged childern. The

duet between the Earth and the Moon, is indeed, their courtship and protestation of mutual love and regard.

About the second aspect of the treatment of nature the students of Shelley need no reminder about the well-known fact that Shelley was not only a poet and myth-maker but also a student of nature, keenly interested in the scientfic inventions and discoveries which were lifting the veil to uncover the mysteries lying behind things.

In his poetry these scientific facts and commonly observed phenomena of nature are presented in vivid, concrete and lively images of poetry. It is the alchemy of poetic imagination transmuting the scientific truths into the radiant forms of art : Mark the following description of sun-rise which blots out the stars and the meteors from the face of the sky:

> The pale stars are gone !
> For the sun, their swift shepherd,
> To their folds them compelling,
> In the depths of the dawn,
> Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
> Beyond his blue dwelling.

Then note also the description of the birth of meteors in the second Act, given by one of the Fauns for the information of his companion.

But the most elaborate exampie of this practice is provided by the minute description of the Earth and the Moon, and the fact that the latter spins round the former and gets light from it is rendered lyrically and romantically as the confession of a love-lorn maiden:

> Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
> I must hurry, whirl and follow
> Through the heavens wide and hollow,
> Sheltered by the warm embrace
> Of thy soul from hungry space,
> Drinking from thy sense and sight
> Beauty, majesty and might.

This brings us to the natural description which have many noteworthy points in them.

In the first place, Shelley was interested in the grand and sublime aspects of nature, in avalanche, glaciers, in storm and volcano, and in the play of lightning and in the roar of cataracts and of thunder, in light and its operations and rarely in the density of darkness. The setting of the first act and the details of the torture given in the long speech of the bound Titan provide ample proof of the fact that Shelley, like Aeschylus, was interested in that beauty of nature which has terror in it. The tameless energy of nature attracted him because of its capacity for making sudden changes. Mark the following description :

......a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Hark ! the rushing snow !
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,
Thrice shifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round !
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

Or

Like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind
With earthquake shock and swiftness; making shiver
Thought's stagnant chao.

Other agents of transformation are mist and vapour, the glittering dew drops and the sprays flung up by waves and coming down like a shower of pearls.

Panthea describes 'a wide plain of billowy mist, as a lake paving the morning sky, with azure waves which burst in silver light :

And far on high the keen sky-clearing mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted ocean's dazzling spray
Spangles the wind, with lamp-like water drops.

But natural descriptions in the play abound in lovely images also. Consider the following picture of Mercury :

'See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn'

In the first act the horrible description of the Furies that darken the birth of the day is followed by the picture of the spirits of consolation, 'like flocks of cloud in spring's delightful weather, thronging in the blue air.' Ione explains :

Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skicy grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

The last lines of the above passage naturally lead us to those description where Shelley has renderded the variations, subtle and minute, of light and colour in the sky at sun-rise or sun-set, as well as the diffusion of light itself, as it is shot forth by an object. Note the following description of dawn as it appears to Asia, waiting for Panthea:

The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn

Beyond the purple mountains......
......now it wanes : it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads,
Of woven clouds unravel in the pale air;
'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow
The roseate sun-light quivers

Panthea describes her vision of the transformed Titan as follows :

the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed over
By love ; which from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth a vaporous fire ; an atmosphere
Which wrapped me in its all dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun.

As a colourist Shelley has been compared to Turner and a critic has well commented on this aspect : 'The scale of colour is light and aerial and the darker shadows are rare. An excess of luminousness seems to be often radiated from the objects he often looks at, and in this radiation of many-coloured light the outline itself is apt to be a little misty' : Shelley often mixes together light, music and odour, like the swift-moving orbs described by Panthea, in Act IV (253-260) :

With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Seem kneaded into one aerial mass
Which drowns the sense.

Of imaginary landscape examples can be found in the account of Asia's journey to the cave of Demogorgon, and in the passages which describe the places suitable for the residence of the liberated Titan and his house-hold.

CHAPTER SIX

Act-Wise Summary of the Play

ACT I

WE are introduced to Prometheus, bound to the Precipice of icy rocks in a ravine in the Indian Caucasus, with Panthea and Ione, sisters of his beloved, Asia seated at his feet. Time is the last lap of night and as the scene advances, morning slowly breaks.

With his eyes fixed on the heavens Prometheus addresses Jupiter, lord of Gods, Daemons, and of all spirits, save the speaker alone, and of the rolling orbs in the sky, on which his gaze, as that of the speaker himself, is sleeplessly fixed; and urges him to turn his look down to the Earth and the human multitudes inhabiting it, who offer him knee-worship, praise and prayer, but for reward get only his hate and wrath in the form of grinding labour, broken hearts, fear, self-contempt and fruitless hope. He himself is the worst victim of his blind hate, which has, however, left him unsubdued to triumph over the torture he has been pleased to inflict on him. For three thousand years he has endured torture and solitude, scorn and despair, and every hour of this confinement has been infinitely prolonged by sleepless misery and excruciating pain, till he has learnt to glory in his empire of misery, grander to him than his own celestial kingdom. An unconquered victim of his shameful tyranny he remains nailed to the wall of this cloud-kissing mountain, black, bleak, limitless and barren of vegetation in the pangs of ceaseless misery, without any hope of relief or change. But the elements, the earth, the mountains, the sea and the sky will bear witness to the fact that he has endured his torture with fortitude.

Recounting the details of his torture he says that he has been bound by the chains of 'crawling glaciers', the cold crystals of which pierce him like spears and like burning fire eat into his bones, and the eagle, sent by him fully imbued with the poison of his hatred, to cover up his heart : and nightmare phantoms float before him, mocking at his misery; the demons of the Earthquake rushing through the momentary gap of the cloven mountain wall, under his command, pull at the rivets of the chain in his quivering wound to sparken his pain, while the howling spirits of the storm rise from their concern, guiding the fury of the whirlwind to shower piercing hail on his helpless body. But undaunted he welcomes the day of frosty weather and the starless night in the dull sky, because they

mark the passage of slow-moving hours, one of which like a dark Priest, will drag him for sacrifice, when his mighty lordship will kiss the bleeding feet of his prisoner (the speaker himself) if he is not spurned with contempt to know his distance. But he disdains him no more : he now pities him in view of the dire ruin fate has in store for him, when alone and undefended in wide heaven he will find his soul agape with terror.

But he is speaking of his fall not with exultation but with grief, for misery has made him wiser than he was before, when he cursed him in the bitterness of his heart. He would recall the curse which he uttered but has now totally forgotten, and calls upon the mountains, which echoed his thundering curse ; the frozen springs which vibrated and crept shuddering to hear his words; the calm Air, through which the sun moved burning without beams; the swift whirlwinds which were arrested by his words, louder than their own, to repeat the words to him, who has outlived his hate and ill-will.

In reply four mountain voices speak of the terror and misery caused to them by his curse but they are mute about the curse itself. Then the Earth speaks to inform him that the mountain Cavern cried 'misery' on hearing his curse, and the sound was echoed by the sky and the ocean and broadcast by the blowing winds.

Prometheus is struck with a confusion of voices short of the words of his curse and complains to the Earth, his own mother, as well as the mother of all natural objects, that she and her children have no regard for him, whose all suffering resolution alone has saved them from complete annihilation in the consuming tyranny of all powerful Jupiter. He appeals to the lawns and streams in the bosom of rocks, through whose shettering woods he once walked with his beloved Asia, drinking life from her living eyes, to converse with him, because he alone has shielded them from the falsehood and fear of Jupiter whose fiendish reign has reduced mankind to a flock of groaning slaves.

The Earth replies, 'they dare not', and Prometheus explains that the awful sound of some bodiless being standing close to him, has filled his body with a tingling sensation, but he would be grateful to hear the words of his old curse.

The Earth replies that she can repeat the curse only in the language of the dead which he cannot understand; and the language of the living she cannot breathe because the cruel king of heaven would be provoked into compelling her to revolve round an axis, much more painful than the familiar one. Prometheus is subtle and good, better than the gods for his wisdom and kindness. So he, unlike the gods, can hear the words of the dead. She reveals to him, in reply to his enquiry, that she is the Earth, his own mother, who felt a wave of joy, thrilling all the veins and entrails of her diversified

frame as he rose out of her bosom like 'a cloud of glory'. At his voice the groaning mortals lifted up their bowed heads, and the almighty Tyrant grew pale with dread and in desperation chained him down with thunder.

This caused a terrible convulsion in her wide sphere to which the rolling worlds in heaven were silent witnesses. Her light faded in heaven ; the sea was vexed with a furious tempest ; the mountains were split by earthquake and their snow-clad summits were lit up by new flames, trembling under the frown of Heaven. The plains were vexed by flood and lightning ; blue thistles bloomed in cities and luxurious chambers were infested with crawling, famished Toads; famine was rampant among all creatures, and the earthly surface, demanded of all healthy vegetation was overgrown with poisonous words; the breast of his mother Earth went dry with grief; and the vapour of her groans tainted the air.

His curse echoed through all her childern's bosoms and has been treasured by the people in the kingdom of the dead. They meditate in silent joy and hope over his dreadful words, but dare not utter them. Prometheus prays to his mother Earth to repeat the words of his curse, because, she is the provider to all her children of some comfort, which now cannot reach him.

Earth now explains to him a strange fact which is supported by the actual experience of sage Zoroaster who while walking one day met his own image moving in the garden. In fact, there are two worlds—the world of the living on this earth; and the world of the dead, beneath the grave, peopled with forms and images, which are united to the living persons when they die. Besides this, all dreams and aspirations of faith and love are also there. His own present image is there writhing with pain and so is the case with images of all the gods, of all the monarchs of nameless kingdoms etc. Even images of dark Demogorgon as well as of respledent Jupiter are there. He should call any one of these shades, his own or that of Jupiter or of any one of those hideous creatures of Evil which the tyranny of the heavenly king has brought into being to trample upon the prostrate mankind. The dead so invoked cannot but reply and they can speak with impurity because the fury of the Supreme cannot hurt the 'vacant shades'.

Prometheus calls upon the shade of Jupiter to arise and appear to solve his problem. The advent of the shade is suggested by the reactions of Ione and Panthea who are anxious about the welfare of Prometheus for the sake of their sister, Asia. They are terrified by sound accompanying the shape which is like that of the whirlwind underground, of earthquake and of splitting mountain. The shape is as awful as the sound, clothed in dark purple and with a gold staff in his hand to support his steps over the slow cloud. He looks calm and strong, but wears a cruel look, like one who inflicts suffering on others and does wrong but cannot tolerate in it others.

The phantom is puzzled about the secret power of the living world which has driven him from the kingdom of the dead, and the strange accents which are crowding his lips involuntarily and which are quite unlike the lifeless sounds passing for converse in his dark world. Then turning to 'the proud sufferer' before him he accosts him, and is informed by Prometheus that he is a Titan, foe to the terrible God whose image (shape) he represents. He is requested to utter the sounds of the curse which the 'proud sufferer' is eager to hear, and the Earth calls upon her children to hear the curse and rejoice silently. The Phantom is seized with an irresistible impulse to speak. As Ione and Panthea are fear-stricken with his mighty looks, Prometheus notes the reflection on his face of those proud gestures of firm defiance and of despair lurking behind the smiling lips, and hardly had he uttered the words 'speak, speak', before the words of his curse came pouring out of the Phantom's mouth. It is a long curse which begins with a fearless defiance flung in the face of 'the foul Tyrant of Gods and Human kind, to rain his plague upon him, and device all the tortures which alternate frost and fire, cutting hail and throngs of furies may inflict upon him, and to visit his beloved mankind with darkness, and affliction. His oppression would make no change in him, chained to the icy wall to watch his tyranny in heaven 'in sleepless agony'. But he curses him with the fervent wish that his 'sufferer's curse' may cling to him till infinity like the poisoned robe of Hercules and crown on his head may burn and dissolve his brain. He goes on : 'May this curse multiply your ill-deeds and the sight of the good, infinite as the universe, damn your soul ! May you sit, calm and proud in your isolated majesty till the advent of the destined hour which will expose your hollowness and hurl you down to survive only as a by-word of universal scorn for all the time to come !'

Prometheus, silent with surprise, is assured by the Earth about the authenticity of the repeated curse, and he regrets that in the blindness of his suffering he gave way to his bitter hate ; but in the altered frame of his mind he wishes no living thing to suffer pain. Mistaking this mood for capitulation to the Tyrant the Earth bursts into a passion of grief over the defeat of her brave son, and her woe is echoed by all her creatures.

Ione, however, assures her that the Titan still remains unvanquished, and draws her attention to the vision of a shape gliding on the current of the slant winds, with his golden-sandalled feet under plumes of purple colour, and advancing towards them with a 'serpent-cinctured wand in his right hand.' Panthea recognizes him to be Mercury, the herald of Jove, while Ione points to a dark multitude of awful shapes, with snaky locks and iron wings, pressing forward in their flight which Mercury is hard to put it restrain. Panthea tells her that they are the tempestuous Furies whom angry Jove unleashes like hounds to run on the bloody trails of his groaning victims and feed on their misery. They, however, find the bound

Titan firm in his mildness. The Furies are delighted at the scent of life and the hope of torturing their victim and urge god Mercury to let them enjoy their food and sport. Mercury, however, bids the crowd to go back to their abode in hell and gnash their foodless teeth beside the rivers of fire and sorrow, for he will take only four of them with him—Geryon, Gorgon, Chimaers, and Sphinx, the sublest of the evil spirits, which was instrumental in bringing the curse of heaven on the people of Thebes in the form of 'unnatural love' and 'unnatural hate'. Bidding the now-docile crowd to crouch in silence, Mercury approaches the Titan and informs him that he has come most unwillingly, at the command of his great Father, to execute a new revenge of heaven upon him. He pities his lot and hates himself for his inability to help him. When he returns to heaven after seeing him in his misery heaven become hells for him, because his mind is haunted by the vision of his pale, outworn form. He is, beyond question, wise, firm and good, but single handed he but vainly opposes the omnipotent Jupiter, who has, even at this moment, armed the Furies of hell, with strange power to inflict unimagined tortures upon him. He has led them to the place along with some more subtle and savage friends of hell, and has to leave them there to play havoc on him. But there is still room for compromise and reconciliation. The conditions are that the Titan must reveal the secret, known only to him, concerning the power that may change the present set-up in heaven, and, like a humble suppliant bend his knees, his proud heart and will to the authority of Jupiter to get his pardon.

Prometheus replies in a tone of cold bitterness that evil minds are always apt to corrupt the good to their own nature. The powers of Jupiter were really his gifts in return for which he has received only his punishment and age-old torture, as well as the slavery of his beloved mankind plagued by his hellish agents. An evil creature cannot feel the effect of good. Submission to him is out of question, for it will only confirm the captivity of mankind, perpetually hanging over the race like the sword of Damocles. Others may fall a tyrant, dressed in his brief authority and lulled by his sense of security. He himself, however, is made of a different metal, and in the midst of his ceaseless suffering he sits calm in the hope that the fated retribution will come and avenge the wrongs done to him and his people. But Mercury must begone, for the Furies are clamouring for their prey and his heavenly father is frowning at his delay. Mercury inquires about the duration of Jove's power and Prometheus returns that he knows only this much that the end of Jupiter shall come one day. Mercury asks him to remember the endless period of his torture which the all-ruling Jove will certainly provide for him, and Prometheus says curtly that even his torture will end one day. He assures Mercury that he is content with his miserable lot and cares a fig for the joys of heaven in the company of gods.

Mercury offers his pity for the Titan, but the latter tells him to

pity the self-despising slaves of Jupiter in heaven, not him who sits calm and collected in triumph over his misery. But enough of this fruitless talk; he must come to the main business and call the dark Furies.

Mercury retires in a mood remorse and Panthea sees the vision of 'the child of Heaven' running down the sunbeams with winged feet. But Ione cries to her that the Furies are coming like a black cloud, darkening the sky and the earth below.

The Furies stand and arouse Prometheus with their taunts. The Titan who is amazed at the sight of unimagined foulness of the hell-hounds who seem to convert his gazing self to their own likeness.

The first Fury informs the Titan that they are the ministers of pain, fear, hate, despair and crime, and pursue like hunting dogs, the living, weeping, miserable slaves of Jupiter, when they are set on their track. Prometheus says that they are not unknown to him and his surroundings only they have clothed themselves in unusual hideousness and horror.

The second Fury asks her sisters to rejoice and informs Prometheus that as lovers are delighted by gazing on each other so they revel in the agonies of their victims, which gives them shape and form, otherwise they are shapeless like their mother, Night.

But Prometheus tells them that he laughs at their power and at the cruel might of their master. They may rend his body and grind his bones, and pour on him their cup of worst pain. He is concerned only with the suffering incidental to their cruelty to others.

The third Fury informs him that they would not torture him physically, but mentally. They may not injure his soul, but they will be a living presence beside it like a noisy multitude, which destroys the self-content of wisest men. They will live as dreadful thought in his brain, and a foul desire in his vexed heart and mixing with the blood in his veins they will fill his body with crawling agony. But Prometheus returns firmly that he is the master of all the conflicts and confusions of his heart and mind, and their threat cannot unnerve him.

The Furies, then, invoke the ministers of evil operative in all parts of the world to join them in the execution of Jupiter's command, and all of a sudden the ears of Ione and Panthea are struck with the thunder of new wings, which darken the space above and around. The new ministers describe the places from which they have hurried at their summons—from the gulf of war, from famine-wasted cities, from the conclaves of kings where 'blood is bought and sold with gold'. The narrative is cut short lest it should break the spell which is being worked to bend the stern mind of the invincible Titan. They conjure up two visions before the eyes of the Titan, who gloried in his love for mankind, in order to destroy his faith

and hope and fill his soul with the fever of doubt and desire. The first vision concerns the crucified Christ, lover and saviour of mankind whose religion has tainted the pages of history with crimes and massacres.

Christ came to this blood-stained earth in full confidence to redeem mankind to love and peace. He preached a new religion which survived him and poisoned the minds of his followers, giving rise to religious wars in which cities were set on fire, and multitudes of men and women were put to the sword. His pale ghost wanders through the dark ruin 'wailing for the faith he kindled'. The Furies raise a shout of joy as they unroll before their victim the visions of the tainted past, dark future and sanguinary present. The vision of Christ nailed to the cross, bathed in blood and tortured by agony. fades and makes room for the second vision—that of the French Revolution, in which a band of oppressed people rose up against tyranny in the name of Truth, Freedom,L ove and brotherhood. But before long they were divided by discord, resulting in civil strife and the reign of blood and terror which blasted all faith in the goodness of man and paved the way for the triumph of tyrants and slaves.

A low and dreadful groan of agony rises from the torn heart of the Titan at sight of the visions of two great tragedies of human history. Even Panthea and Ione, symbols of Faith and Hope, are paralysed with despairing woe and fear at sight of a patient youth nailed to the cross, overlooking a heap of human corpses, wrought by human hands and the cold cruelty of human hearts expressed in frowns and smiles, and other sights too dreadful to contemplate.

One of the Furies urges Prometheus to behold the emblem of pain and torment which the labourers for the welfare and happiness of mankind heap upon themselves and on men, despite their noble suffering. Prometheus is moved with deep pang of pain and pity and in a tone of tender solicitude asks the youth to close his staring eyes burning with agony, and his pale, colourless lips : stop the stream of blood trickling from his thorn-wounded brow to mingle with his tears : He should sink into the peaceful slumber of death so that the crucifix may not shake with his sick throes nor his pale fingers play with his wounds. He is not going to utter his name which has been occurred by his followers, who hate the wise, the mild, the lofty and the just for being like him, chase them out of their beloved homes, or send them to languish and pine in dark dungeons or to roast in fire. Then he sees visions of wretched kingdoms ! whose children have been consumed by the fire of their own homes, kindled in his name.

The Fury asks him to contemplate the horrors worse than blood, fire and groan of human victims—the horrors that abide in the hearts of men. Fear survives the ruin in human aheart; even the noblest fear the things which they refuse to think to be true; hypocricy and custom compel men to worship an obsolete religion; they

dare not devise good to improve the lot of men, and an unaware of their lack of courage; the good are weak and sentimental, and the strong lack goodness, which seems to be useless to them; the wise lack love and the loving want wisdom ; thus even good things in men turn to ill. There are many men rich, strong and disposed to be just, yet they live among their suffering fellowmen without a terror of feeling for them, as if their actions were mechanical and involuntary.

Prometheus replies that the words of the Fury have stung him with the fangs of a snake, yet he pities those who are not touched by remose for their lack of feeling. The Fury is silenced and quietly quits the spot.

The dawn is visible in the east and Panthea flies to the Indian Vale to report to Asia, her sister. Meanwhile Prometheus gives out a wail of agony caused by the new tortures which the tyrant has inflicted upon him. He covets the lot of mortal men who find peace in the grave : he cannot expect this 'consummation' as he is immortal, nor does he want the peace of the grave. He glories in his victory over his vindictive oppressor, whose tortures, even the newness, has filled him with greater resolution to endure his tortures till the hour arrives to end them.

Panthea, in great anxiety, inquires about the nature of the new horrors Prometheus has beheld, and the latter replies that he has witnessed two horrible visions, one of which (the vision of Christ and Christian perversion) he would not describe, but the other was the spectacle of a noble revolution, launched in the high-sounding names of truth, liberty and love, which, alas ! ended in confusion, mutual strife and deceit, followed by the establishment of despotism.

The earth now addresses the Titan, whose torture and fortitude have filled her with grief mixed joy. She would summon now those fair and subtle spirits, which dwell in the dim caves of human thought, and can look into farther and more clearly than any other being. They may give solace to his wounded heart. Ione and Panthea become aware of a cloud of delightful spirits, whose wings fill the air with sweet music.

The spirits form a chorus and singing before the Titan, tell him that from time immemorial they have been guiding the ill-fated humanity, inhabiting the mind of man, in all its changing weathers, fair and foul. They voyage through the boundless element whence they have borne a prophecy which concerns the Titan alone.

The first spirit has come on the blast of a war-trumpet, regaled with a confused cry of 'freedom ! hope ! death ! Victory', which rose above the darkness, above the dust of the old, obsolete creeds and the torn banner of the tyrant. They faded and then the whole atmosphere resounded with one sound—it was the soul of Love, which crowns their prophecy with hope.

The second spirit was an eye-witness of the stormy ocean

over looked by the immovable arch of a rainbow, the vexed surface of which was strewn with the shattered ships of a fleet. He has speeded there on the sigh of one who gave his plank to an enemy and himself plunged into death.

The third spirit has been brought there, swift as Desire, as the fiery wings of a Dream which he found hovering round the bedside of a sleeping sage, and knew it to be the same as had kindled pity, eloquence and woe in times long gone by.

The fourth spirit was sleeping, like a seasoned lover, on the lips of a poet who, unconcerned with human joys, lives on the sweetness of the airy shapes that haunt the wilderness of thought. He looks on the natural beauties with a heedless eye, but creates out of their solid realities forms more real than living men and free from the taint of mortality. One of these immortal forms roused him up and he has hurried thither to console the Titan.

Ione and Panthea are, at this point, surprised by the vision of two shapes, gliding from east and west, whose sweet sad voices mingled with love melt in the air and soft smiles light the atmosphere like 'a star's fire'.

The fifth spirit replies to the query of the Chorus 'hast thou beheld the form of Love?' That as she was winging her way through the vast space she beheld that celestial shape, speeding ahead of her, scattering from his heavenly wings the liquid joy of life. His footsteps had paved the world with light which was fading as she reached there, when she saw gaping ruin in the wake of Love, revealing the glimmering phantoms of sages in the grip of madness; headless patriots and youths who perished uncomplaining. She wandered on till the smile of the fellow-spirit, the king of sadness, turned her worst sights into recollected gladness. The sixth spirit says to her that Desolation is delicate and insidious and lulls the tender hopes in the hearts of the best and the gentlest, who, soothed to repose by the music of her plumes and feet, dream about imaginary joys and mistake them for Love, so that they wake up to find pain instead of joy like the bound Titan.

In reply to this pessimistic colloquy between the fifth and sixth spirits the Chorus sings to the Titan that though Love is now pursued by Ruin, on the white and winged steed of Death, treading upon all creatures, good and bad alike, the Titan will quell and tame that swift steed of Death.

Prometheus asks them, 'how know ye this shall be'. The chorus of spirits replies that as the mild winds of spring give to the sheepherd a clear intimation of spring and its blooming flowers, so wisdom, Justice, Love and Peace which they breathe like air, form the basis of their prophecy.

The Spirits vanish, leaving behind only a sense of their presence like the echoes which linger in the depth of the soul long

after the cessation of music, vocal or instrumental. Prometheus, however, says that lovely though the Spirits are but all hope is vain but love, which he now misses as his beloved Asia, the lovely receptacle of his flowing youthful love, is away from him. The stillness of the morning weighs on his senses and he can sleep even in his grief, if suffered to do so. He would live only as a saviour of suffering humanity or sink into the abyss of nothingness. He is now incapable of feeling the solace of the Earth or the torment of Heaven. Panthea reminds him of herself who watches him all through the cold winter night and sleeps only when his shadow falls on her. Prometheus tells her that it is because she loves him.

But morning is approaching and Asia is waiting in her Indian vale. The scene of her sad exile, once rugged and bleak but now transformed into flowery vale of sweet stream by her ether which would fade in isolation from him, says Panthea as she leaves the Titan and hurries towards the abode of Asia.

Critical Comments

The first Act is the most solid part of this otherwise unsubstantial and ethereal play and reminds us of the original Greek play by Aeschylus in many of its critical details, though the process of transformation effected by Shelley is quite apparent even here. Thus the scene of action is the Indian Caucasus (known as Mt. Hindu Kush), instead of European Caucasus in the original and the change was perhaps motivated by Shelley's fidelity to the old legend that this Indian tract was the native place of primitive humanity in the golden age.

The sublime scenery is partly derived from the Greek original and partly from the memory of the glacier haunted mount in ranges actually seen by the poet during his wanderings in central Europe and Italy. The most dominant factor in the torture of the Titan is piercing cold, as Shelley replaces the iron chains of Aeschylus with the flesh-penetrating streams of creeping glaciers though, as in Milton's hell, cold performs the function of fire. The central figure, the bound Prometheus on the wheel of ceaseless agony because of his bold defiance of Jupiter's tyranny and refusal to disclose the secret concerning the future of his sovereignty, closely resembles the hero in Aeschylus, except for the effect of age-long oppression on his temper. The Greek hero remains obdurate in his hate for Jupiter and all the epicurean gods in heaven, while Shelley's champion of oppressed humanity, has become wiser under suffering, and pities the tyrant whose own evil will be his undoing, and whose fall has been decreed by destiny. This conviction has made him invincible in his suffering and impervious to all suggestions of capitulation or compromise.

The Chorus here consists of the Earth, mother of the suffering Titan and Panthea and Ione, sisters of Asia, his exiled consort, who

is the symbol of Love while her sisters stand for Faith and hope respectively, rendered ineffectual in the Titan's isolation from love.

This Shelleyan chorus is obviously much more integrated with the action of the play that the ill-defined and unattached chorus in the original.

Mercury, the minister of the new tortures for the uncompromising Titan, is a different figure altogether from the taunting scoffer in the Greek play. Shelley has reduced the three messengers in Aeschylus to one and given the attributes of the other two, that is, sympathy and opportunism, to Mercury. As regards the tortures heaped upon the defiant Titan Shelley has spiritualized the concrete, physical and revolting horrors in Aeschylus.

There is a passing reference of Jove's eagle, the winged hound of heaven, tearing his heart with its poisoned beak, while the Furies, black monsters of hell, ferocious with their snaky locks, iron wings and ravenous appetite for blood and torture, come hot from another play of Aeschylus, yet in Shelley the torture is mental in as much as the Furies put the Titan's soul on the rack by means of subtle suggestions and visions demonstrative of the depressing fact that those who work and fight for the good of humanity and sacrifice themselves for Truth, Love and liberty simply court contempt and scorn for themselves and the yoke of despotism, slavery and untold miseries for the human multitude.

But even a cursory glance through this opening act will convince the reader that the present play is essentially original, because Shelley makes the concrete human action of the original a mere spring-board for his imaginative flight into 'the intense inane', that he is more interested in exploiting opportunities for lyricism, and his cherished dreams of the golden age than in the development of action or the delineation of character. People who look for these dramatic elements are naturally puzzled and offended by the profuse strains of Shelleyan lyricism, with its wealth of radiant and crowded imagery and cloying strains. Lanier's comment on this Act is a fair specimen of this critical attitude, and deserves to be quoted here :

> "We have page after page of talk before this first act is finished......the very wordiness of it, the detail, the diffuseness—which ramble all over the heaven and earth and search the very depths of the spirit world for similies, until the reader's mind is brought to a condition like that when one repeats a word over and over till the word loses all meaning. I think I know not a single poet—not even among the Elizabethans, whose besetting sin is wordiness—who sins so prodigiously in this respect."

In justification of Shelley's practice in the present context at least one may venture to say that the poet is anxious to work the reader into sympathy with his golden dream for which it is necessary to lift his mind 'afar from the spheres of our sorrows' by freeing it completely from the ordinary human connections and considerations

and all the gross chains which bind it to the earth. He has placed us on a plane of thought where spirits and voices, echoes and phantoms appear before us to talk and sing like human figures and then dissolve in the 'air like the baseless fabric of a dream'. Shelley was much more familiar and at home with this world than with our earth and its teeming population, with its daily struggle for getting and spending, for snatching the moments of pleasures from the clutches of despair and pain. Under his etherial touch the solidities of action and character dissolve into a number of glittering phantoms with winged feet and musical voices, moving in a world which is invested with the hazy vividness of a dream.

ACT II

Love becomes active to initiate the process leading to fall of the Tyrant and the advent of the golden age which is to follow in its wake. It is a spring morning and Asia is waiting anxiously for the arrival of Panthea, her sister and the happy messenger of the separated lovers.

She addresses the spring which has descended from the stormy winds of heaven, like a thought or the memory of a sweet dream which fills the eyes with 'idle tears'. Yet like a spirit of joy it rises from the earth to clothe nature with light and life. This is the season, the day, the hour when Panthea, her sister, should come, and the delay has wrought a dull suspense in her. Time seems to crawl on leaden feet and Asia's eyes are watching the changing complexion of the morning sky, when her attentive ears catch the aerial music of Panthea's sea-green wings 'winnowing the crimson dawn'. In a moment she appears before Asia with a smiling face and tearful eyes and is greeted as 'beloved and most beautiful', clothed as she is in the shadow of Prometheus's soul, by which Asia lives.

Explaining her delay in reaching there Panthea says that her wings became faint with the excess of joy caused by a dream she saw last night. Previously she used to sleep peacefully in the arms of her sister, Ione, but since the Titan's fall and her (Asia's) separation from him she has become familiar with love and woe, as the medium through whom wordless communications pass between the two lovers, and her sleep has naturally become disturbed and her waking fraught with care and pain. Asia, however, is too impatient to hear out this long prologue ; and asks Panthea to raise her eyes so that she may read her happy dream. But Panthea continues that as she slept with his sister at the feet of the Titan she was visited by two dreams : one of them has slipped from her memory, but one happy dream is still vivid. In this dream she saw the wounded Titan

transformed into a radiant figure, who asked her in a melodious voice to fix her eyes on him. She did so, and her eyes were dazzled with the glory that was streaming out of his limbs and creating an atmosphere of light around him. In a moment that glory passed into her entranced blood and they two were blended into one being. She heard his voice but could make out only one distinct sound which uttered her (Asia's) own name. Meanwhile Ione was awake with a troubled memory of something sweet but vague and asked her to explain the cause of it, but Panthea hurried to meet her sister without losing a single moment. Asia now gazes into her deep eyes and is able to see the image of Prometheus, radiant and smiling, enthroned there in all his glory. Then the vision is crossed by another form, wild and quick, with rude hair and a gleaming robe. Panthea says that it is her other dream. As the vision melted into the thin air she was able to describe her strange sensation in which she felt the trees and plants suddenly bursting into blossoms, which faded and fell, and on the bare leaves she could read 'woe' marked as cleary as those on the Hyacinth, the favourite flower of Apollo.

This account enables Asia to recall her own dream in which she seemed to be wandering along the mountains under a cloudy morning sky when she saw the whole purple slope covered with the inscription, 'Follow, O, Follow!' Then she heard the echoes of the words in the wind, and looking into the eyes of Panthea her companion, she saw the same inscription in their depth. As she is talking the atmosphere around them is suddenly charged with the echoes urging them to follow the floating music through the hollow caverns embosomed in a wood to an unknown world, to meet a sleeping voice whose rest will be broken by the sound of Asia's foot-falls. The echoes hold out the promise that their descent into the dark depth of the mysterious cave would end the separation of the two lovers (Asia and Prometheus) and unite them permanently.

The sisters set off in pursuit of the echoes, linked arm in arm.

Scene II

Asia and Panthea pass through a rocky forest, by the side of a crag on which two Fauns are seated together. The scence is described vividly and elaborately by a chorus of spirits filling the air with their songs, which underline such details as the impenetrable shade of the forest crowned with a roof of interwoven leaves and branches, so that the nightingales are singing all the broad noonday, in relays of melodies, which are taken up by the second nightingale as the first feels exhausted. The wood is charged with joyous strains which urge and lead the wayfarers along the secret path leading to the cave of Demogorgon, while the gusts of gentle wind press them on from behind like the impluse of great desire.

The Fauns begin to speculate about the abode of these spirits and the second Faun refers to the prevailing belief that they dwell in the misty air which the sun sucks from the pale waterflowers that pave the oozy bottoms of lakes and pools. When the bubbles in this air burst into fiery meteors, they float upon them and at last descend into water again. But they must hurry up to milk the goats of Silenus in order that he might be induced to sing his songs, of Fate and Chance and Chaos of Love and woêful captivity of the Titan as well as his final release and triumph which would usher into being the age when the whole mankind would be knit into a single brotherhood.

Scene III

Panthea and Asia are led by the spirit-voices to the mighty portal, which emits a cloud of enchanted vapour which lonely men in their wandering youth inhale into the depth of their intoxicated hearts as truth, virtue, love and joy which they proclaim to the dreaming humanity to kindle a new birth.

Asia is filled with a feeling of deep adoration for that Earth which forms the magnificent throne of mighty Demogorgon. It is a land of mountains and lovely vales, of sounding cataracts and clouds of floating mist. The curtain of mist is painted with radiant, lovely shapes which call upon them to desend 'down and down' into the depth never visited by the light of the sun, moon and the stars, where Doom lie coiled up like a snake underneath the throne of the one pervading deity. They must awaken the Doom through the portal of life.

Scene IV

Asia and Panthea enter the cave of Demogorgon, stand before his dark throne and as the curtain is drawn aside they discover a mighty form without shape and limbs, a living spirit, lacking form or outline. Demogorgon asks them to question him about whatever they desire to know, and Asia puts to him a number of questions to which answers are returned by him to the effect that the living world and all thoughts and passions as well as the sensibility to feel the effect of the sweet memory in all its intensity have been created by God. But when Asia asks as to who made terror, madness, crime, remorse which taint every thought within the mind of man, turn love into hate, hope into despair, and self-contempt 'bitterer to drink than blood', Demogorgon only says, 'he reigns', but refuses to disclose his name.

This leads Asia to the recounting of the history of the succession of heavenly rulers and their effects in different ages. At first the rules were Earth and Heaven, who propagated Light and Love. Then came Saturn and heralded the operation of time and change in the

world. It was the age of primal innocence of humanity, without knowledge and power to control the universe, without any capacity for thinking and without the magic and majesty of love. Then came Prometheus who gave wisdom to Jupiter, as a patent of strength and the sole sovereignty of wide heaven on the only conditions that he should grant freedom to men. But he became omnipotent and despotic without faith, law and love. He rained down on men famine, disease, toil, strife and violent death. The year was divided into winter and spring, and to the physical hardships were added the disquietude of mind occasioned by insatiable desires and thirst for unreal and false attainments which turned the earth into a noisy battle field. Prometheus pitied the lot of man and sought to soften the rigour of his life. He sent down Hope to hide Death, and Love to heal the wounds of hate; he tamed fire and placed it at the disposal of man for the development of his art and skill to exploit the resources latent in Nature and the elements. He gave man speech, which created thought to control the universe. Thus was developed science which spread its mastery over earth and heaven; poetry which manifested itself in enchanting songs; Music which uplifted the spirit of man above mortal cares and fears; the art to turn marble into perfect human forms which moulded the childern of gazing mothers into lovely living figures; skill in controlling diseases with medicinial herbs; which made death painless. He taught the laws which govern the motions of Sun, moon, stars and planets; gave the power to tame stromy seas which united men of different countries and nationalities. Then cities were built and civilization advanced space.

And for all these benefits Prometheus lies bound and withering in his pain. So she wants to know the power which sent down Evil which corrupts the god-like faculties of man and makes him contemptible and forlorn. It is not Jupiter certainly, because behind his imposing pomp and power he is really a cowardly slave. Demogorgon replies, that all evil-doers all enslaved by their own wickedness, and she herself can decide if Jupiter be such or no. She is also told that he used the term 'God' as a conventional name familiar to her, but this much is clear that Jove is the master of all living things. Asia rejoins that Jove is a slave of his own evil, but who is his master ? Demogorgon replies that it is a secret which cannot be put in words; she must know that all things are subject to Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change, but eternal Love. Asia says that this much was instinctively known to her but he must tell her the precise hour which will bring about the release and exaltation of Prometheus. Demogorgon only commands her to look about and Asia is surprised to behold a number of cars driven by rainbow-winged steeds, each with a wild-eyed, radiant charioteer. She is told that they are the immortal hours, one of which will answer her purpose. Asia confronts a spirit of dreadful countenance and asks it about the place where it wants to take her. The spirit says that it is the image of a dire destiny

which would wrap kingless throne of heaven in dateless night.

Panthea asks her sister to mark how the terrible shadow has leaped into the car and set the courses flying at a terrific speed through the stars. There is yet another chariot in the shape of an ivory shell inlaid with red fires, which is driven by a young spirit, with dove-like eyes of hope and alluring smile. The spirit invites Asia, daughter of Ocean, to ride with it in the chariot with its lightning-footed coursers, before the time for rest comes at noon.

Scene V

As the chariot flies with the speed of lightning impelled by the breath of Asia, Panthea is struck with the sudden appearance of light flooding the clouds. The spirit tells her that it is not the light of the sun, but the glory which shoots from the person of Asia. Panthea looks at her sister who inquires about the cause of her amazement.

Panthea, then, bursts into a lyrical recital of the transfiguration Asia has suddenly undergone, so much so that she cannot see her face for the excess of radiance which has clothed it. The elements must have become translated to suffer her naked glory amid them. This transformation reminds her of the story told her by the sea-nymphs about her appearance at the time of her birth from the womb of ocean. She stood within a veined shell that floated on the crystal sea-surface among Aegean isles wrapped in the glory of love which illumined Earth and Heaven and the dark caves of mountain and sea, till the grief of her soul caused by the fall of her consort obscured it. But now she stands robed in her native splendour which has enraptured not only her sister but all the animate and inanimate things which are bound to her by a secret sympathy.

Asia says that her words are sweet as the accents of her great lover himself, because they are inspired by love. Love like common light, wide heaven and the all-sustaining air pervades the world and makes a reptile equal to God. They are happy indeed who inspire, but far happier are those who feel it most, after long suffering, as she shall soon realize.

Meanwhile they are regaled with a rapturous song in the air which is a glorification of the light which has filled her to overflowing so that it streams out and penetrates the earth and the living air above it like the splendour of the morning sun.

The scene ends with a heart-lifting song of Asia who has been abstracted from all restrictions of time and space by the experiences of the moment. Like an enchanted boat her soul seems to be afloate on the silver waves of the song, piloted by the spirit. She is driven by sweet music through the Elysian garden islets where the air is pervaded by Love, which harmonizes the earth with our thoughts above the earth. They have passed beyond Age, Manhood,

Youth and Childhood, beyond Birth and Death 'to a diviner day' into a paradise of lofty and starry bowers, watered by sinuous streams bordered with a wilderness of greenery, peopled by shapes too bright to see.

Critical Comments

The first act ends with an indication that the process of regeneration has started with the spiritual outlook of the invincible Titan and the prophetic songs about the final triumph of love and goodness. The second act takes the process to a crucial stage through the instrumentality of Asia, symbol of Love, who has been roused into activity by the two dreams of her sister : one of these dreams foreshadows the final release and transformation of the Titan, while the second is an image of the toughness and violence of the means which would make that happy dream a glorious reality.

The world around them begins to resound with the recurrent sounds, 'Follow, Follow', and the two sisters, linked arm in arm, signifying Love united to Faith, proceed on their arduous journey following the spirits, as if under the compelling force of their own desires, through rough rocks and dark woods into the cave of Demogorgon. The journey describes in terms of the physical details of the natural scenery the hardships attending a spiritual quest for the discovery of the mystery which lies like a coiled serpent at the heart of the universe.

The description of Demogorgon is reminiscent of the picture of the Supreme Reality, one and Infinite which is often termed as 'divine dark' because its light can be endured by no mortal eye. The details in the description of Demogorgon's cave point to the fact that he is, among many other things, the law of the regeneration at the heart of the universe, under which winter is followed by spring, and young human hearts inspired by truth, love, justice and liberty to wage ceaseless war upon evil till the world is affected by the fervour of their thoughts.

The meeting between Asia and Demogorgon has to be pondered over very carefully, because a hasty reader may jump to a wrong conclusion. Here we are given three factors responsible for the generation of mankind—active Love, sympathetic law of the universe and the point of time when the tyrant is destined to fall. At first sight it appears that Shelley is preaching fatalism, subjecting man's free will to the decree of destiny. But a closer consideration will reveal the fact that the primacy belongs to the human will. Thus Asia and Panthea march ahead impelled by the gentle sound which derives them on their path, 'while they/believe their own sweet

wings and feet/the sweet desires within obey'. It means that external aid is effective only when the human will has fixed itself on its purpose. Again, the meeting with Demogorgon serves the important purpose of bringing home to Asia the strength and invincibility of Love which she incarnates. As soon as Asia has realized her native strength the destined hour does not refer to any definite point of time, because the moment human will is able to assert itself the hour of the tyrant's fall will arrive. It is interesting to recall in this connection the well-known statement of Mrs. Shelley that evil for the poet was something negative and rootless and would disappear as soon as man *wills* its removal.

Lastly, the Act takes us a step further from th solid world of Aeschylus into Shelleyan world of ethereal scenery, bright spirits and phantoms and strains of aerial music which may burst upon our ears and confuse them with too much sweet. The action has to wait as this music rolls on like a river laden with coils of images and similes, coming in quick succession like linked sweetness long drawn-out'.

ACT III

The act opens in the court of Jupiter, who is shown seated on his throne, with Thetis, his bride and other deities assembled before him. In blind ignorance of the doom which has already been set in motion he vaunts before the 'congregated powers of heaven' that he has become almost omnipotent, only the soul of man remains defiant of his power, offering him reluctant prayers, with doubt, reproaches and rebellious miseries, which threaten to shake the security of his throne, resting solidly on primitive superstition and fear of Hell. He has hurled down curses and plagues to torture the rebels yet the soul of man remains unsubdued by misery. But he has begotten a dreadful child who is only waiting for the advent of the destined hour to rise from the vacant throne of Demogorgon, in all the terror of his mighty links, to crush the last spark of insurrection in the human soul. He asks his cup-bearer, Ganymede, to fill the cups of his courtiers with nectar which may send joy circulating their veins and fill the heaven with a wave of harmonious exultation issuing out of the hearts of ever living gods.

Then he turns to his consort, Thetis, bright image of Eternity, veiled in the light of desire which made her one with him, and requests her to sit beside him on the exalted throne. He reminds her of her fear for the insufferable might and fire of his heavenly body eager to mingle with her shivering frame, yet the union of their mighty spirits did actually take place and it produced a child mightier than either of its parents. The child still floats invisible, felt but unseen, waiting for the time for its incarnation in the body which

would rise from the seat of Demogorgon. Indeed, the thunder of th chariot hurrying through the air is already nearing Olympus, with i dreadful burden.

The car of the Hour arrives and Demogorgon, descending from it, advances towards the throne of Jupiter, who stands amazed at th dreadful presence and inquires about its identity. Demogorgo announces, in a tone of curt majesty, that he should know him a Eternity and without further inquiry follow him into the abyss remembering that as he himself proved stronger than his father, go Saturn, in the same way his child is mightier than its parent. The must dwell together in darkness for all the time to come, and hi thunder cannot save his throne, which would, from that time, remai vacant for good.

Jupiter offers to oppose him and hurls his threats and furious words at 'the detested prodigy', but suddenly feels his might dissolving, cries for mercy and some limit to his confinement in the dark abyss. He even implores him to make his own victim, the suffering Titan, his judge, believing that his sentence would be milder, because he is a gentle, just and dreadless monarch of the world.

But receiving no response from his implacable adversary he offers to sink with him into the abyss like a vulture and a snake interlocked and exhausted which sink into the bottomless sea. After this let Hell open the sluices of its fiery flood upon the desolated world and on both of them, the conqueror and the conquered. But he realizes his impotency and with cries of 'woe, woe' he goes down and down into the gulf of darkness, with the victor pressing heavily on his sinking figure.

Scene II

The fall of Jupiter has created a change in earth and sky, which is explained in a conversation between Apollo, the sun-god and ocean at the mouth of a great river in the Island of Atlantis Apollo informs the sea-god that Jupiter fell under the frown of his dreadful adversary whose sound was like the last glare of the sinking sun which burns afar on the agitated surface of the stormy ocean. Jupiter sank into the abyss like an eagle, entangled in the whirlwind on the cloudy peak of Caucasus, with its eyes blinded by white lightning and its struggling form battered by the showers of hail till it sinks into the void.

The Sea-god tells him with joy that henceforth his watery realm, unstained with blood, will shiver under the sweeping wind like a field of corn and its sparkling current will flow round the populous continents and round fortunate isles, and ships passing on its glassy surface would be watched by Proteus and his nymphs, who would no more be troubled by blood and groans and desolations of

ship-wrecked mariners. They will instead be regaled by the light of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours and music soft and mild such as spirits love.

Apollo also is glad to think that he would now be spared the sight of painful deeds that used to darken the earth. His speech is cut short by the musical note of the spirit that sits in the morning star, reminding him of his daily duty. The ocean also hears the loud call of the hungry deep and points with joy to the Nereids under the green sea, floating on the stream with hands uplifted to their streaming hair crowned with the many-coloured sea-flowers, hastening to participate in the joy of their mighty sister, Asia. So they part with a promise to meet again in the evening.

Scene III

This scene takes us to Caucasus where Prometheus is unbound by Hercules in the presence of Panthea, Ione, Asia, the Earth and the Spirit of the Hour. After unbinding him Hercules tells the Titan that his act is only a token of the tribute which strength pays to wisdom, courage and long-suffering love, all of which are embodied in his glorious self. Prometheus appreciates the gentle words of his benefactor, and taking leave of him he turns to Asia and her sisters, together with the attendant Hour to explain his future programme. He addresses Asia as the light of life, incarnation of ideal Beauty, and her fair sisters whose love and care for his suffering self is a memory to be cherished in days to come, and tells them that they are going to live together in perpetual union.

He describes the place of their abode. It is a cave overgrown with 'trailing odorous plants which screen the place from the glare of the day. In the midst of it a fountain leaps up with a noise and the hanging mountains overhead rain down a mild light from their frozen tops. The place is musical with the moving whisper of leaves and the sounds of birds and bees. This will be their simple dwelling where they will sit talking about time and change and the vicissitudes of fortune, operative in the human world, themselves being free from them. There Ione will sing to them and they will while away their time in smiles and tears alternating with each other and capable equally of providing delight. They will, like human children, make strange nosegays by combining buds, flowers and beams. They will also search for hidden thoughts with words and looks of love, and make divine music sweeter than the harmonies produced by winds as they pass through a suspended lyre. Their ears will be regaled with the gentle echoes from the human world, the gentle whisper of love, the melting tone of pity and the note of music rising spontaneously from the depth of the heart. They will also have the visions of those lovely creations of human artists who are better able to incarnate the heavenly Ideas which were dim before, but have become clearer

with the increase of insight into the mysteries of beauty—painti sculpture and poetry and other arts which may develop in futu These lovely visions will be messengers of love, running constan between them and human beings. These forms will grow lovelier man moves towards perfection, gradually shedding from himse veil by veil, evil and error.

Then turning to the Spirit of the Hour he explains the la service it has to perform before its permanent settlement with the He gives him the conch, presented by old Proteus as Asi marriage gift, a mystic shell, which seems to contain 'a lulled mus sleeping inside; and asks him to ride in the air, blowing the con over mankind and loosening its mighty music upon the ears of t people.

Then as he begins speaking to his mother Earth the latt exclaims with joy that she feels his lips upon her which has thrill her to the dark depth of her heart and sent a wave of warm bloc coursing through her cold, dry veins. She seems to have be kindled with the energy of. immortal youth. Henceforth all h children, plants, birds and beasts will draw healthy nourishment fro her, instead of the disease and pain which despair had bred in h during the reign of the tyrant. The dew-mist exhealed by her wi fall down like balm, from which flowers will suck fresh colour, an men and beasts imbibe strength, in their repose, for the coming da and the embrace of death will be sweet and maternal. Asia objec to her reference to death and inquires about the change which come over those who die. The Earth tells her that being immortal sh cannot understand the language known to the dead, suffice it to sa that death is a sleep which draws aside the curtain hiding realities.

She takes up the thread of her story and says that the mild sea sons and odorous winds, long blue meteors purging the night and life giving light of the sun and the cool beams of the moon will cloth even the barren crags with fruits, flowers and green foliage. There i a cave where she used to retire to pant forth her anguish, caused b the suffering of the Titan and naturally people who inhaled the air i the cave became mad. They built a temple there where decepti oracles were given out to foment quarrels and 'faithless faith' among the nations. But now her breath rises like violet's exhalation and fills the rocks and hills around with gentle light and warm air. This breath hasturned the place into a happy garden, charged with the odour of star-like flowers and the fruits hanging down from 'their own green heaven of leaves. The breath pervading the place, 'like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams', inspires calm and happy thoughts. She offers that cave to the Titan and his family, and then summons her spirit, her torch-bearer, who lit his lamp. in old time with gazing on the eyes of Asia, instinct with the fire of love. She directs the spirit to guide them beyond the peak of Nyasa, and river Indus and its tributaries, through all the networks of streams, lakes and pools, up the green ravine, across the vale, to the temple which stands there, complete in all its parts and overwrought with the

er-living images and statues 'whose marble smiles fill the hushed air ngth everlasting love'. It stands deserted, but once it bore the name re Prometheus, in whose honour the ambitious young men organized tlay races, in which the lamp, his emblem, was transmitted by one anner to another and so on. Beside this temple stands the Cave, their dwelling place, for which they are asked to depart.

Scene IV

Prometheus and company are nearing the Cave under the guid-nce of their flying carrier, which excites the wonder and curiosity of one. Panthea tells her that it is the delicate spirit that guides the b of the earth through heaven and passes for a planet because of s head-light. Sometimes it floats along the sprays of the salt a, or rides on a foggy cloud or walks through fields or cities as men eep or own mountain tops or down the rivers feeding his curiosity ith all that passes before its eyes.

Before the commencement of Ione, reign it came each leisure riod to Asia, whom it loved, to drink the liquid light in her eyes, d share his confidence, with her of what it had seen and known, the inconsequential language of a child. It called her 'mother', owing nothing about its real parents. Meanwhile the Spirit comes nning to Asia with the cry of 'mother', eager to know if it can k with her as before, hide its eyes in her soft arms, after they had come satiated with the delight of gazing into her eyes; and if it n play with her the noons long, when it was free from its labours.

Asia welcomes the gentle spirit and offers to love and cherish unenvied. She asks it to begin its simple talk which once solaced , but now would delight her heart. It tells her that it has grown er and happier because of the great change that has come over earth. Formerly its feet were hampered by ugly and poisonous atures and branches that bore ill berries in the wood. Among haunts of mankind it was troubled to see men with hard features proud, angry looks, cold and mechanical gait or hollow smiles or l sneer of conceited ignorance and such foul masks which hide noble spirit of man. And women, those fair creatures, who ked ugly and repulsive with their frown and mask of falsehood, de its heart sore.

But lately it happened to pass through a sleeping city when all a sudden its ears were greeted with a long sweet sound which sed up the inhabitants from their slumber. The Spirit hid itself he fountain, but kept its eyes fixed on the scene. What was its ght when it saw the ugly masks of men which used to hurt loating through the air and vanishing gradually, leaving the faces nen mild and lovely! They were surprised at the change and r a brief exchange of greetings retired to sleep again. And in morning it was delighted to see that all ugly and repulsive

things had put off thin old looks and shone in new colours. The most delightful scene which it happened to see was a pair of azure halcyons feeding on one bunch of ripe berries, casting a lovely reflection in the lake below. So they are meeting in the happiest mood.

Asia assures the spirit that they are not going to part till its sister Spirit of the cold, inconstant moons looks upon its warmer light with love, as she herself loves Prometheus. For, simply by gazing into each other's eye they will not be able to fill the air with lovely images of their bright selves.

At this point the spirit of the Hour returns to Prometheus and gives him an account of the changes in the human world wrought by the music of the couchshell blown by it. The spheres of sky and earth were transformed as if the spirit of Love had permeated every pore of them. Its vision was purged and it could see into the mysteries of the universe so buoyed up with deep joy it floated down its chariot to glide on the mild air on its languid wings. Its steeds went to their birth place in the sun to feed on the flowers of vegetable fire, while its moon-lit car will remain inside the temple which stands on twelve columns of bright stone, and is surrounded by beautiful statues, of the Titan himself, of Asia and the Earth, of the speaker itself and of the sisters of Asia, all expressive of love in their hearts.

Then it calls back its wandering tongue to the point and resumes its narrative. As it floated to the Earth its heart ached with joy to move in and breathe gladsome air. Among the haunts of men it could find no change at first sight, but very soon its disappointment yielded place to unalloyed joy when it saw the thrones without kings and men walking like happy spirits completely free from the stains of flattery, oppression, hate or fear, self-love or self-contempt. Their faces were cleared of abandoned hope or frown or fear born of the cold sneer of the tyrant, generating self-contempt till the day of death. There was no deceptive face wreathed in smile to conceal the wickedness which the tongue would not express.

There was no human figure bereft of the sparks of love and hope under the icy touch of contempt, creeping among men like a vampire infecting all with its hideous evil—none talked the common, false, cold hollow talk which conceals truth of the heart and makes it mistrust its unmeant hypocrisy. And women, too, were seen walking frank, beautiful, kind like the light and dew of heaven, free from the taint of custom, and speaking the wisdom they once dared not think, and looking emotions they could feel and changed to all which they dared not before. Yet, as the earth has been changed to heaven thin pure love is free from pride, jealousy, ill shame which spoiled its taste in days gone by.

And thrones, altars, judgement seats, prisons, together with scepters, crown, swords and chains, and fat volumes of misleading laws, with their erroneous interpretations were all converted into the images of absolete evils swept into the relics of forgotten savugery.

imilar is the case with the temples still standing amid human dwell-ıgs, which were once dedicated to cruel gods, images of Jupiter, xacting human sacrifices from panic-stricken nations and heart ɹoken lovers and pespondent wretches.

All the earthly illusions which men had mistaken for realities ave vanished, revealing the true nature of humanity, a brotherhood f free, equal, uncircumscribed men and women, without king, class, ribe and nationality, exempt from awe, worship, degree; just, gentle, vise.

Human passions are still there, but they are free from guilt or ɔain, at the service of men like tamed animals. Man is still swayed by hance, change and death, which are the necessary clogs to keep him within his proper limits. But for them man would have outsoared he loftiest star in the bright void of heaven.

Critical Comments

The opening scene of this act deals with the most dramatic part f the fable, namely, the conflict between the forces of tyranny and beration, but Shelley does not care to exploit the dramatic possi-ility of the situation and thus disappoints those of his readers who, mpted by the title 'a Lyrical Drama' look for the dramatic elements. he act opens well showing Jupiter in his glory, boasting about his mnipotence, which his child is destined to make complete by uelling the obdurate soul of man. The dramatic irony implicit in e situation is quite reminiscent of that in Shakespeare's *Julius aesar*, where Caesar boasts about his superhuman dignity while the nspirators are preparing to prove that he is mortal.

But this situation ends in a way which is an anti-climax in the orst sense of the term. The car of Demogorgon reaches there and ɪpiter is surprised but remains defiant at sight of the dreadful image darkness. But while we crane our necks to witness a battle royal, find that Jupiter the terror of earth and heaven was really an figy of paper, which the frown of his adversary blasts in a trice. ıelley leaves the details of the so-called conflict to be elaborated etically by Apollo conversing with the sea-god. By making piter, the embodiment of evil, a mere negation or non-entity elley has robbed the poem of the element of conflict, which is the ul of drama. If Evil is to disappear when the destined Hour has rived then human struggle and human responsibility are super-ous. By the same token the unbinding of the Titan by Hercules a mere formality, because he is automatically free with the over-row of Jupiter.

But when she has been liberated and the golden age has been

ushered into being the saviour of mankind, it seems, has achieved the fulfilment of his mission and he has no programme for the future. He has only to settle with Asia and his household, a typical Shelleyan household, in his earthly paradise, to smile and weep over the songs of Ione or Panthea, and taste the sweetness of the music floating from the world of transformed human beings, or contemplate the visions of the evergrowing loveliness of Furies wrought by the human artists of deeper insight.

In this part Shelley's man has become free from the fetters of events and dramatic structure to fly into 'the intense inane' and pour out elaborate descriptions of the happy changes taking place on earth and in heaven. First comes the description of the pastoral paradise from the Titan himself, and this is followed by an equal description of another place from his mother Earth. This is matched by the graphic picture of another temple given by the Spirit of the Hour.

Then a number of eye witnesses come forward, with their voluble lyrical tongues, to furnish accounts of the revolution which has suddenly followed on the heels of the fall of Jupiter, an embodiment of tyranny, political, social, religious and intellectual. The Earth, god Apollo, the Spirit of the Earth and the Spirit of the Hour, each has its share in this lyrical jubilee, which overwhelms the reader with a flood of poetic moonshine, numbs his reason and sends his critical faculty to sleep.

The second half of this Act and the whole of the last Act will remind the reader, with increasing force, of the well-known description of Shelley, the poet, by the great Victorian critic, Mathew Arnold, as 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating, in the void, his luminous wings in vain'-

ACT IV

The first scene of this Act is laid in a part of the Forest near the Cave of Prometheus. Panthea and Ione are shown sleeping when a burst of spirit song is heard in the air and gradually 'awaken'. The voices of unseen spirits announce the advent of dawn, herald of the sun, who is gradually rising up, so that pale stars in their glittering array are fleeing from the blue plain of the sky. They call upon some unseen spirits and in response a train of dark Forms and shadows pass by singing confusedly that they are carrying the bier of Time, father of the past hours, going to bury Time in its tomb. They would strew on the royal corpse of time the faded flowers of the earth's bare bowers, and melt away from the light of the blue heaven, with the lullaby of the dying winds.

These voices have set a conversation in train between Ione and Panthea. In reply to her sister's queries Panthea tells her that the dark Forms are the weak and old past hours with the spoils of the days of tyranny which had conquered all but the invincible Titan. They have now fled to the dark abode of dead things.

They are interrupted by the voices of unseen spirits who are singing about the universal melody of joy which is rising from the clouds, waves, winds, fountains and swinging branches of pines. As the sisters are wondering about their identity they announce that they have come from the dark deep in the wake of the voices of the Spirits of Air and of Earth. They had been kept confined for hundred ages dreaming of hate and care and waking to find the truth darker than their dreams. Now they have leapt up to hear the music of Hope Love and Power. They will now sing and dance and weave a magic circle to slow the speed of the day, which formerly ran fast like a a wounded deer chased by the hungry Hours. As they are uniting to weave the mystic measure, the spirits of the human mind, wrapped in sweet sounds approach to join the throng of dance and song. They are wild and fleet, with wings soft and swift as thought and their eyes are resplendent like unveiled love.

They are the spirits of the mind of man, now an ocean of clear emotions: they come from the dark recesses of human heart, now replete with wonder and bliss; from the lofty towers of human thought whose powers are watching this merry dance; from sweet wisdom and high temples of man's eye and ear, from the unscaled springs where science is fluttering her wings, they have come. Formerly they used to struggle with blood and tears, and the thick hell of hatred, hopes and fears, but now, they can fly with fresh wings to a paradise springing under the light of love. So they dance and leap with all freedom through earth and in the sky, soaring beyond the stars to settle in the void. Chaos, Death and Night will fly away from the sound of their wings, and under their wings will gather Earth, Air, Light and the Power that governs the motion of the Stars: and Love, Thought and Breath which are powers that quell Death.

They will build in the void, with their song, a world to be ruled by wisdom, and taking their care from man they will begin their Promethean work.

Thus they break and unite, whirl round the gathering sphere, leading by golden strings 'clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain'. They vanish in the air, leaving behind the echoes of their songs.

Then Panthea hears the music of the rolling world charging the bosom of air with modulations, and Ione feels the clear, keen tone, piercing her senses, to live within the soul. Panthea suddenly points to the emergence of two radiant visions from the two rants in the forest. Ione identifies one of the visions as that of the chariot of moon moving towards her western cave. Over her chariot is curved a cloudy canopy and its wheels are solid clouds, blue and golden;

within the chariot sits a winged infant, of snow-white colour, which gleams through its white robes woven of dew drops. Its hair is white, but its eyes are heaven of liquid darkness, which the Deity within seems pouring. In its hand it sways a quivering moon beam, rom whose point a guiding power directs the chariot's point over its wheels, which move musically over grass, flowers and waves.

Panthea describes the second vision, a sphere, made as if of many thousand spheres, rushing through the second opening with a loud, tempestuous music. A nearer view reveals ten thousand orbs, 'involving and involved' of different colours, and every space between them peopled with unimaginable shapes, which visit the ghosts in their dreams. These numerous spheres are spinning round invisible axles, and producing enchanting and intelligible music, which mingles with the light of the brook. The odour of the flowers, and the music of living grass and air, and drowns the sense with its confused intensity within the Orb is visible the Spirit of the Earth sound asleep, with its folded wings and wavy hair, and parted lips moving, as it seems to Ione, to the rhythm of the Orb's music. Panthea continues that from a star upon the forehead of this Spirit are issuing vast beams; like spokes of invisibe wheels, filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings, which pierce the dark soil and reveal the infinite wealth of minerals hidden in the depth of the earth, and wells of unfathomed fire and water springs which feed the sea. The flashes of the beam also reveal cycles of old civilizations in the shape of primitive tools and implements which were swallowed by devouring destruction. Beside them lie the ruins of vast cities peopled with uncivilized mortals with their uncouth skeletons, rude homes and temples. Then there are, over this huddled heap of ruin, fossils of unknown birds, fishes, serpents, clinging to iron crags. Over these lie the remains of the giant beasts, huge alligators and behemoth which once haunted the slimy shores and multiplied like summer flies till they perished in a deluge or under the fiat of some celestial god.

The Earth now raises a cry of jubilation born of her intoxicated delight, which wraps her like an atmosphere of light which shoots upto heaven and thrills the heart of the cold moon and 'passes through her frame with the warmth of flame, with love, odour and melody. The Earth sings that the mountains, ocean and deserts are laughing with joy, which is echoed by the living air. Tyranny is gone, which rained down back destruction on all her creatures and battered them down with hate. With the destruction of tyranny and her black brood love has bloomed upon the shattered rocks.

The Moon responds to this song with deep exultation, because the joy exhaled by the Earth has melted her frozen mountains and filled her with fountains, oceans, green stalks with bright flowers and living, moving shapes:

The Earth feels that the light of love has penetrated her whole frame, from the tangled roots below the soil to the delicatest leaves and flowers above and created life even among the forgotten dead. A

living energy has burst out, like a storm from the bosom of clouds, out of the dark cover of unimagined being, which has shivered the chaotic stagnation of thought and put hate, fear and pain to flight from man, who was formerly, like a manysided mirror distorting the truth of things in this fair world which ,is now informed with love, moving over mankind like the sun, raining light and life from starry depth. Man is now comparable to a child abandoned for leprosy but magically healed into ruddy health to the inexpressible joy of his wondering mother.

Man now is the name of the host of individuals reduced to indissoluble unity by the compelling force of love just as the crowd of planets are kept in order by the pitiless gaze of the sun. Man is now one soul made of a happy union of numerous constituent souls, and he is the king over himself, with no external control, but love to which all his activities are directed, so that labour, pain and grief have become pleasant. His will, which all his passions now obey, is like a ship piloted by love, to bring the wildest shores of life under its sway. He has subdued all things by his strength; marble and colour give form and life to his dreams and language has yielded all its musical resources to body forth, in harmonious pattern of sounds, a throng thoughts which lay inert and useless. He has tamed lightning, discovered the hidden stars of heavens, named them and numbered them. He has mastered the tempest, made the air a thoroughfare and wrenched all the secrets from the deep abyss.

The moon replies that her orb is now free from the ghostly shadow of death, yielding place to her newly-woven bowers, the roaming ground of happy lovers, more mild than those haunting the deeper vales of the earth. The Earth feels herself to be wrapped in a transparent mist, like a fleece of fire and amethyst, and to the moon she appears to be invested with the light of her own joy, receiving showers of light from suns and constellations, which overflow into her own sphere. The Earth sings that she spins beneath her pyramid of night, which points into the heavens' dreaming delight, murmuring with joy in her enchanted sleep. From this point it will be better to take the duct as musical exchanges of endearments between the Spirit of the Earth (male) and his sister the Spirit of the Moon (female) whose hearts are kindled with love, as Asia had prophesied. Shelley was obsessed with the idea of incestuous love between brother and sister.

The moon sings to the Earth that when his (now male) shadow falls upon her she becomes mute with the fulness of joy and his love. As he spins round the sun, shining with his divinest light she, his white paramour, is irresistibly borne beside him by the power of love, and moves round his orb under the intoxication of excessive love. So wherever her brother moves in heaven she must follow and spin round him, sheltered by the warm embrace of his soul, which gives her beauty, power and majesty and turns her into his likeness.

The Earth confesses that his proud heart has been soothed and

softened by the voice of the gentle moon, which falls on him like the clear and tender light of her orb upon the tired limbs of the eager seaman, who has sailed the whole summer night through the peaceful isles.

The duct is over and Panthea tells her sister that the effect of the melodious sounds has been like that of a bath of sparkling water. Ione is affected by the soothing sound of her words, but Panthea suddenly directs her attention to a mighty power rising like darkness from the earth pouring down from the sky, and like an eclipse saturated into the pores of sunlight it bursts from the air. Out of the darkness words seem to fall upon their ears. It is Demogorgon with his universal voice addressing the Earth and the Spirits, above and below with overpowering effect. He calls upon the Earth, a calm empire of a happy soul, a sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies; the Moon, which gazes on the Earth with wonder, and both are gazed upon by men, beasts and birds; the powers of suns and stars, gods and daemons, and the spirits of the Ether, which dwell beyond the constellations of heaven; the happy Dead beyond the power of the poet to paint; the elemental Genii, which inhabit all the parts of the universe, including the human mind; the spirits of lower creature, and, lastly, man, just freed from slavery and stepped out of the darkness of the grave into the immortal day—to deliver the following message:

This is the day when the spell of Prometheus has ousted the tyrrant and filled the vacuum with love, which folds over the world its healing wings, Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance are the qualities which effectively withstand the force of Destruction and help man to control his doom. To suffer woes with undying hope, to forgive the blockest wrongs, to defy even the omnipotent power; to love, endure and hope to the bitterest end and remain steadfast to one's purpose, is to be good, great, joyous, beautiful and free, like the glorious Titan. It is these qualities which form the essence of Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

Critical Comments

This last Act of the lyrical drama was an after thought which Shelley composed a few months after the completion of the third Act, where the play logically ends. But Shelley, the lyrist, was far more powerful than Shelley, the dramatist, who was interested in the story of Prometheus for the simple reason that it offered him a legitimate opportunity to give body and substance to his golden visions of Millennium, This wanton violation of dramatic decorum has outraged sober critics, and Campbell, for one, has voiced his irritation in the following words :

"What an offence against the inner logic of the three unities in a play which begins with Prometheus and Furies in time and Caucasus and ends with the Sun and the Moon in Elysium and Eternity !"

When Shelley unbinds his Prometheus his drama falls out to bits, and his stage becomes a chaos. The real actors are crowded out of it, while portions of the scenery, the full orchestra and flashing lights make glorious havoc of the whole, till at length Demogorgon restores order—and dramatic harmony—with his sublime perforation, and the curtain falls."

But Shelley has been defended also by critics like Bowra, who observes, "Act IV is necessary to Shelley's design if he is to say all that he has in mind about the various spiritual forces which govern life. *Prometheus* is so much a drama of ideas that he has no very great place for action and the dramatic interest is continually sacrificed to other more urgent needs." In this view the protagonist of the play is Millennium, which is so bright and nebulous that its effect can be conveyed by music, a harmony of diverse melodies, raised by a host of jubilant creatures which the visionary eyes of Shelley could descry in the known and unknown spaces of the universe.

Shelley himself was intoxicated with this vision, so like Ariel, the Shakespearean spirit of air and fire, he assumed myriad shapes, Spirits of different categories, Earth, Moon and Demogorgon, to pour down his full-throated strains of unpremediated art, which come down in sparkling floods 'like light dissolved in star-showers thrown'—till the entranced reader cries with Panthea—'I arise as from a bath of sparkling water./A bath of azure light, among dark rocks, Out of the stream of sound'.

It is only after the lapse of this spell that our sneaking critical faculty murmurs timidly—'too good to be true', but imagination silences it with the words of Browning : 'Have some joy to die with dim-descried'.

"What an offence against the inner logic of the three unities in a play which begins with Prometheus and Furies in torture and Caucasus and ends with the Sun and the Moon in Elysium and Eternity!"

When Shelley unbinds his Prometheus his drama falls out to bits, and his stage becomes a chaos. The real actors are crowded out of it, while portions of the scenery, the full orchestra and flashing lights make glorious havoc of the whole, till at length Demogorgon restores order—and dramatic harmony—with his sublime peroration, and the curtain falls."

But Shelley has been defended also by critics like Bowra, who observes, "Act IV is necessary to Shelley's design. It helps to say all that he has in mind about the various spiritual forces which govern life. Prometheus is so much a drama of ideas that he has no very great place for action and the dramatic interest is continually sacrificed to other more urgent needs." In this view the protagonist of the play is Mind which is so bright and nebulous that its effect can be conveyed by making a harmony of diverse melodies, united by a host of jubilant creatures which the visionary eye of Shelley could descry in the secret and unknown spaces of the universe.

Shelley himself was intoxicated with this vision; so like Ariel, the Shakespearean spirit of fire and air, he assumed myriad shapes, Spirits of different categories, Earth, Moon and Demogorgon, to pour down his full-throated strains of unpremeditated art, which come down in sparkling floods like light dissolved in star-showers thrown—all the enchanted tender tones with Panthea—'Tis like a fount of sparkling water, A jet of azure light among dark rocks, Out of the streams of sound."

It is only after the lapse of the spell that our sneaking critical faculty murmurs timidly—'too good to be true', but imagination silences it with the words of Browning: "Have some joy to die with dine-described".

CHAPTER SEVEN

Text of Prometheus Unbound

A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts

*Audisne haec Amphiarae, sub terram abdite ?**

Preface

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited in the Athenian theatre with as many variations as drama.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The 'Prometheus Unbound' of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language

*'Hearest thou these things, Amphiaraus, hidden away beneath the earth ?' (This line was inscribed by Shelley on the title page of the first edition of *Prometheus Unbound*, London 1820).

Amphiaraus, a seer, deceived by his wife Eriphyte, unwillingly took part in the war of the Seven against Thebes, in the course of which he was swallowed up in a cleft in the earth with his chariot by Zeus.

and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Promethus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force; he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakspeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works, (since a higher merit would probably be denied me,) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular; than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the production of those extra-ordinary intellects. It is true that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those, whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the

endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakspeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christan religion. We owe Milton to the progress and developement of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain of these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Aeschylus and Euripides, between

Virgil and Horace, between Dante, and Petrarch, bet ween Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have initiated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Aeschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid: and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others; be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient: let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

Dramatis Personae

PROMETHEUS. APOLLO.
DEMOGORGON. MERCURY. HERCULES.
THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.
THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.
THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.
SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.

JUPITER. ASIA
THE EARTH. PANTHEA } Oceanides.
OCEAN. IONE

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. FURIES.

ACT I

SCENCE. *A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS *is discovered bound to the Precipice.* PANTHEA *and* IONE *are seated at his Feet. Time, Night. During the Scene, Morning slowly breaks.*

PROMETHEUS : Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape, or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm;
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain, ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing chrystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.

Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night.
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain ! Ah no ! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hurt thee undefended thro' wide Heaven !
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within ! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell !
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering thro' India! Thou serenest Air,
Thro' which the Sun walks burning without beams!
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbed world! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within: although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse ? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE (*from the mountains*) :
Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood :
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE (*from the springs*) :
Thunder-bolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
Thro' a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE (*from the air*) :
I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own,
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE (*from the whirlwinds*) :
We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder.

FIRST VOICE :
But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE :
Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck is agony,
And heard, and cried, 'Ah, woe is me!'
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE :
By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE :
And we shrank back : for dream of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is as hell to us.

THE EARTH : The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery !' then : the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds.
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

PROMETHEUS : I heard a sound of voices : not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan ? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe ?
Oh, rock-embosomed lawn, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me? me alone, who chek'd,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
Why answer ye not, still ? Brethren!

THE EARTH : They dare not.

PROMETHEUS : Who dares ? for I would hear that curse again,
Ha, what an awful whisper rises up !
'Tis scarce like sound : it tingle thro' the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.
Speak, Spirit ! from thine inorganic voice
I only know that thou art moving near
And love. How cursed I him ?

THE EARTH : How canst thou hear
Who knowest not the language of the dead ?

PROMETHEUS : Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

THE EARTH : I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King

Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
Subtle thou art and good, and tho' the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God
Being wise and kind : earnestly hearken now.

PROMETHEUS : Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

THE EARTH : No, thou canst not hear :
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.

PROMETHEUS : And what art thou,
O, melancholy Voice ?

THE EARTH : I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy !
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us : their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its protentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodlass toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled :
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
with the contagion of a mother's hate

Breathed on her child's destroyer; aye, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words
But dare not speak them.

PROMETHEUS : Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

THE EARTH : They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden,
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep thro' vacant shades,
As rainy wind thro' the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS : Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise appear!

IONE :
My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes :
Yet thro' their silver shade appears,
And thro' their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds;
May it be no ill to thee
O thou of many wounds!
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

PANTHEA :
The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veined hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER : Why have the secret powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms ? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness ? And, proud sufferer, who art thou ?
PROMETHEUS : Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth, I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.
THE EARTH : Listen ! And tho' your echoes must be mute,
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

PHANTASM : A spirit seizes me and speaks within :
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.
PANTHEA : See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven
Darkens above.
IONE : He speaks ! O shelter me !
PROMETHEUS : I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll : yet speak : Oh, speak !

PHANTASM :
Fiend, I defy thee ! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and he thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon etherial tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony,
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord : O, thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe !
I curse thee ! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
'Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,

To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally.
And after many a false and fruitless crime
Scorn track thy lagging fall thro' boundless space and time.

PROMETHEUS : Were these my words, O, Parent ?
THE EARTH : They were thine.
PROMETHEUS : It doth repent me : words are quick and vain;
Grief for awhile is blind and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

THE EARTH :
Misery, Oh misery to me,
That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquished.

FIRST ECHO :
Lies fallen and vanquished !

SECOND ECHO :
Fallen and vanquished !

IONE :
Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,
The Titan is unvanquished still.
But see, where thro' the azure chasm
Of yon forked and snowy hill
Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,

Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

PANTHEA : 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

IONE :

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

PANTHEA :

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE :

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed ?

PANTHEA : The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.
FIRST FURY : Ha ! I scent life !
SECOND FURY : Let me but look into his eyes !
THIRD FURY : The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.
FIRST FURY : Darest thou delay, O Herald ! take cheer, Hounds
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent ?
MERCURY : Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise ! and Gorgon,
Chimaera, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.
FIRST FURY : Oh, mercy ! mercy !
We die with our desire: drive us not back !
MERCURY : Crouch then in silence.
Awful Sufferer

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas ! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, heaven seems hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so ! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS: : Evil minds
Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The chrystal-winged snow cling round my hair :
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrants' recompense: 'tis just:
He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, shame; not gratitude:
He but requites me for his own misdeed.

Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield ? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold ! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

MERCURY : Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
And thou to suffer ! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power ?

PROMETHEUS : I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY : Alas !
Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain ?

PROMETHEUS : They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less
Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY : Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved ?

PROMETHEUS : Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

MERCURY : If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while
Lapped in voluptuous joy ?

PROMETHEUS : I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY : Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS : Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,

As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk !
Call up the fiends.
IONE : O, sister, look ! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind !
MERCURY : I must obey his words and thine: alas !
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart !
PANTHEA : See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.
IONE : Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.
FIRST FURY : Prometheus !
SECOND FURY : Immortal Titan !
THIRD FURY : Champion of Heaven's slaves !
PROMETHEUS : He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye ? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul thro' monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.
FIRST FURY : We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue
Thro' wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.
PROMETHEUS : Oh ! many fearful natures in one name.
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathed selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep ?
SECOND FURY : We knew not that : Sisters, rejoice, rejoice !
PROMETHEUS : Can aught exult in its deformity ?
SECOND FURY : The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another : so are we.
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aerial crimson falls flushing her cheek,

So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round,
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS : I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY : Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within ?

PROMETHEUS : Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
Ye rend me now : I care not.

SECOND FURY : Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes ?

PROMETHEUS : I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY : Thou think'st we will live thro' thee, one by one,
Like animal life, and tho' we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men:
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony ?

PROMETHEUS : Why, ye are thus now;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES :

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come. come, come !
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;
Come, come, come !
Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning;
It will burst in bloodier flashes
When ye stir it, soon returning:
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted
To the maniac dreamer: cruel
More than ye can be with hate
Is he with fear.
Come, come, come!
We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

IONE : Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA : These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air : their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY :
Your call was as winged car,
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

SECOND FURY :
From wide cities, famine-wasted;

THIRD FURY :
Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

FOURTH FURY:
Kingly conclaves stern andc old,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

FIFTH FURY :
From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A FURY :
Speak not: whisper noc:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bead the Invincible,

The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

A FURY :

Tear the veil !

ANOTHER FURY :

It is torn.

CHORUS :

The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.
One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
whithering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look! where round the wide horizon
Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Hark that outcry of despair!
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled :
Look again, the flames almost
To a glow-worm's lame have dwindled :
The survivors round the embers
Gather in dread.
Joy, joy, joy!
Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers.
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I :

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now:
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;
To truth its state is dedicate.
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;

A legioned band of linked brothers
Whom Love calls children—

SEMICHORUS II :

'Tis another's :
See how kindred murder kin :
'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin :
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within :
'Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
[*All the* FURIES *vanish, except one*.]

IONE : Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

PANTHEA : Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE : What didst thou see ?

PANTHEA : A woeful sight: a youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

IONE : What next ?

PANTHEA : The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth : those groans are grief enough.

FURY : Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS : Remit the anguish of that lighted stare:
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears !
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible ! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,

Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind :
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells.
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud ?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.

FURY : Blood thou canst see, and fire: and canst hear groans;
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS : Worse ?

FURY : In each human heart terror survives
The ravin it has gorged : the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.

PROMETHEUS : Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY : Thou pitiest them ? I speak no more ! [*Vanishes*]

PROMETHEUS : Ah woe !
Ah woe ! Alas ! pain, pain ever, for ever !
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,
Thou subtle tyrant ! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives

When they shall be no types of things which are.
PANTHEA : Alas ! what sawest thou more ?
PROMETHEUS : There are two woes;
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love !
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.
THE EARTH : I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed joy
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding ether: they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future : may they speak comfort to thee :
PANTHEA : Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air !
IONE : And see ! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark ! is it the music of the pines ?
Is it the lake ? Is it the waterfall ?
PANTHEA : 'Tis something sadder, sweeter, far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS :

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,

Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float thro' all above the grave;
We make there our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Thro' the boundless element :
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

IONE : More yet come, one by one : the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT :

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom ! Hope ! Victory !
Till they faded thro' the sky;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love:
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT :

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immoveably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven half :
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh ;
Mighty fleets were strewn like laugh :
And spread beneath a hell of death

O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT :

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade, its lustre made.
It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT :

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aerial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality !
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

IONE :

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,

Twin nurslings of the all-sustainning air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And hark ! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA : Canst thou speak, sister ? all my words are drowned.

IONE : Their beauty gives voice, See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold :
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS :

Hast thou beheld the form of Love ?

FIFTH SPIRIT :

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses;
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I past 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night, I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of sadness,
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with the lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

CHORUS :

Tho' Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,

On Death's white and winged steed,,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest thro' the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS : Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ?

CHORUS :

In the atmosphere we breath,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow;
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

IONE : Where are the Spirits fled ?

PANTHEA : Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which thro' the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes thro' long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS : How fair these air-born shapes ! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into thirsty dust.
All things are still: alas ! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
Tho' I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink ntoi the original gulph of things:

There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

PANTHEA : Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

PROMETHEUS : I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

PANTHEA : Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile; ruggèd once
And desolate and frozen, like thisr avine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the ether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II

SCENE I. *Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus.* ASIA *alone.*

ASIA : From all the blasts of heaven thou hast decended:
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring !
O child of many winds ! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come !
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl !

The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains: thro' a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:
'Tis lost ! and thro' yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sun-light quivers: hear I not
The Aeolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn ?

[PANTHEA *enters.*] I feel, I see
Those eyes which burn thro' smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.
Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art ! the sphered sun had climbed
The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA : Pardon, great Sister ! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds
Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, thro' use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

ASIA : Lift up thine eyes,

And let me read thy dream.
PANTHEA : As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not,
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy :
'Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
'With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
'Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.'
I lifted them : the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love: which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle thro' my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorb'd, until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody : thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; tho' still
I listened thro' the night when sound was none.
Ione wakened then, and said to me :
'Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night ?
'I always knew what I desired before,

'Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
'But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
'I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet
'Even to desire, it is thy sport, false sister;
'Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
'Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
'And mingled it with thine : for when just now
'We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
'The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
'Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
'Quivered between our intertwining arms.'
I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

ASIA : Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air : I feel them not : Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his writtten soul !

PANTHEA : I lift them tho' they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express : what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there ?

ASIA : Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line thro' line inwoven.

PANTHEA : Why lookest thou as if a spirit past ?

ASIA : There is a change : beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape : 'tis He, arryed
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.
Prometheus, it is thine ! depart not yet !
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build o'er the waste world ? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us ? Its rude hair
Roughness the wind that lifts it, its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air
For thro' its grey robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quench'd not.

DREAM : Follow ! Follow !

PANTHEA : It is mine other dream.

ASIA : It disappears.

PANTHEA : It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost :
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ASIA : As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among these lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
And the white dew on the new bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
And there was more which I remember not :
But on the shadows of the moving clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW ! As they vanished by,
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire,
A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard : OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME !
And then I said: 'Panthea, look on me.'
But in the depth of those beloved eyes
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ECHO : Follow ! Follow !

PANTHEA : The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices
As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA : It is some being
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds ! O, list !

ECHOES [*unseen*] :

Echoes we : listen !
We cannot stay :

As dew-stars glisten
Then fade away—
Child of Ocean !

ASIA : Hark ! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
Of their aerial tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA : I hear.

ECHOES :

O, follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Thro' the caverns hollow,
Where the forest spreadeth:

[more distant]

O, follow, follow !
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Thro' the noontide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
As the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean !

ASIA : Shall we pursue the sound ? It grows more faint
And distant.

PANTHEA : List ! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES :

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean !

ASIA : How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind !

ECHOES :

O, follow, follow !
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,

By the woodland noon-tide dew;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains
Thro' the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now;
Child of Ocean !

ASIA : Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II. *A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns.* ASIA *and* PANTHEA *pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock listening.*

SEMICHORUS I OF SPIRITS :

The path thro' which that lovely twain
Have past, by cedar, pine and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew;
And bends, and then fades silently.
One frail and fair anemone :
Or when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
Has found the cleft thro' which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :
And the gloom divine is all around;
And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS II :

There the voluptuous nightingales,
Are awake thro' all the broad noon-day.
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute;
When there is heard thro' the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

SEMICHOROUS I :

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined soft emotion,—
Attracts, impels them : those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey :
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying : as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet

And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN : Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Which make such delicate music in the woods ?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, tho' we hear them oft :
Where may they hide themselves ?

SECOND FAUN : 'Tis hard to tell :
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell, and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noon-tide kindles thro' the woven leaves;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors thro' the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed.
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN : If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or in the sunlight of the sphered dew ?

SECOND FAUN : Aye, many more which we may well divine.
But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood : delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III. *A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.* ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

PANTHEA : Hither the sound has borne us — to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy.
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Maenads who cry loud; Evoe ! Evoe !
The voice which is contagion to the world.

ASIA : Fit throne for such a Power ! Magnificent !
How glorious art thou, Earth ! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth : Wonderful !
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain :
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumed caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence; Hark ! the rushing snow !
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds

As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.
PANTHEA : Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet ! It rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.
ASIA : The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain
Grows dizzy; see'st thou shapes within the mist ?
PANTHEA : A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks !
Another and another: hark ! they speak !

SONG OF SPIRITS :

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down !
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; today, tomorrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down !

Through the grey, void abysm,
Down, down !
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,

Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone.
Down, down !

In the depth of the deep
Down, down !
Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasur'd but for thee alone.
Down, down !

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down !
With the bright form beside thee:
Resist not the weekness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

SCENE IV. *The Cave of Demogorgon.* ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

PANTHEA : What veiled form sits on that ebon throne ?
ASIA : The veil has fallen.
PANTHEA : I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.
DEMOGORGON : Ask what thou wouldst know.
ASIA : What canst thou tell ?
DEMOGORGON : All things thou dar'st demand.
ASIA : Who made the living world ?
DEMOGORGON : God.
ASIA : Who made all

That is contains ? thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination ?

DEMOGORGON : God : Almighty God.

ASIA : Who made that sense which, when the winds of spring
In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one beloved heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more ?

DEMOGORGON : Merciful God.

ASIA : And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate:
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day:
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell ?

DEMOGORGON : He reigns.

ASIA : Utter his name : a world pining in pain
Asks but his name : a curses shall drag him down.

DEMOGORGON : He reign.

ASIA : I feel, I know it : who ?

DEMOGORGON : He reigns.

ASIA : Who reigns ? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire. and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus

Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
And Jove now reigned: for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes. and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair, wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.

He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea:
He taught to rule, as life directed the limbs,
The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure aether shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who rains down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?
Not Jove; while yet his frown shook Heaven, aye when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master ? Is he too a slave ?

DEMOGORGON : All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil :
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA : Whom called'st thou God ?

DEMOGORGON : I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA : Who is the master of the slave ?

DEMOGORGON : If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets......But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world ? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change ? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

ASIA : So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand; and do thou answer me
As my own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive ?
DEMOGORGON : Behold !
ASIA : The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars :
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair : they all
Sweep onward.
DEMOGORGON : These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.
ASIA : A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou ? Whither wouldst thou bear me ? Speak !
SPIRIT : I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect : ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.
ASIA : What meanest thou ?
PANTHEA : That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo ! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified : watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night !
ASIA : Thus I am answered: strange !
PANTHEA : See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crime fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;

How its soft smiles attract the soul ! as light
Lures winged insects thro' the lampless air.

SPIRIT :

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon:
We shall rest from long labours at noon;
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V. *The Car pauses within a Cloud on the top of a snowy Mountain.* ASIA, PANTHEA *and the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT :

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire:
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !

ASIA : Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT : Alas ! it could not.

PANTHEA : Oh Spirit ! pause, and tell whence is the light
Which fills this cloud ? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT : The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from the mighty sister.

PANTHEA : Yes, I feel—

ASIA : What is it with thee, sister ? Thou art pale.

PANTHEA : How thou art changed ! I dare not look on thee;

I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of the beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Aegean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings ? Feelest thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee ? List !

[*Music.*]

ASIA : Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love.
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God:
They who inspire it most are fortunate,
As I am now; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA : List ! Spirits speak.

VOICE IN THE AIR [*singing*] :

Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks, where whose gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning
  Thro' the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
  Thro' the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
  But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
  From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest
  Its dim shapes are clad with brightness
And the souls of whom thou lovest
  Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am falling,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

ASIA :

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
  And thine doth like an angel sit
  Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
  It seems to float ever, for ever,
  Upon that many-winding river,
  Between mountains; woods, abysses,
  A paradise of wildernesses !
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound :

  Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
  In music's most serene dominions;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
  And we sail on, away, afar,
  Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven;

Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided :
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds and on the waves both move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have pass'd Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray :
Beyond the glassy gulphs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously !

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

SCENE I. *Heaven.* JUPITER *on his Throne*; THETIS *and the other Deities assembled.*

JUPITER : Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice ! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear;

And tho' my curses thro' the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it ; tho' under my wrath's night
It climbs the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepressed. yet soou to fall :
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the destined hour arrive,
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.
Pour forth heaven's wine, Idaean Ganymede,
And let it fill the Daedal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
Drink ! be the nectar circling thro' your veins
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice
Like music from Elysian winds.
And thou
Ascend beside me, veiled in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity !
When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might !
'God ! Spare me ! I sustain not the quick flames,
'The penetrating presence; all my being,
'Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw
'Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
'Sinking thro' its foundation :' even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling; made a third
Mightier than either, which, unbodien now,
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
Griding the winds ?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory ! victory ! Feel'st thou not, O world,

The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
Olympus ?

[*The Car of the Hour arrives.* DEMOGORGON *descends and moves towards the Throne of* JUPITER.]

Awful shape, what art thou ? Speak !

DEMOGORGON : Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee : and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee :
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.

JUPITER : Detested prodigy !
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee ! thou lingerest ?
Mercy ! mercy !
No pity, no release, no respite ! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus ! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world ? What then art thou ?
No refuge ! no appeal !
Sink with me then,
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.
Ai ¡ Ai !
The elements obey me not. I sink
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory ! Ai! Ai !

SCENE II. *The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis.* OCEAN *is discovered reclining near the Shore;* APOLLO *stands beside him.*

OCEAN : He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown ?

APOLLO : Aye, when the strife was ended which made dim
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell :
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN : He sunk to the abyss ? To the dark void ?

APOLLO : An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

OCEAN : Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstain'd with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air; my stream will flow
Round many-peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light-laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

APOLLO : And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit

That sits i' the morning star.

OCEAN : Thou must away;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell :
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.
[*A sound of waves is heard.*]
It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO : Farewell.

SCENE III. *Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the* EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, *and* PANTHEA, *borne in the Car with the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who descends.*

HERCULES : Most glorious among spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS : Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.
Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld : and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, thro' your love and care :
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light :
And there is heard the ever-moving air,

Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability ?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shalt chaunt fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aerial Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
And arts, tho' unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us

Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And, veil by veil, evil and error fall :
Such virtue has the cave and place around. [*Turning to the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.]
For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE : Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell;
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light :
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

SPIRIT : It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PROMETHEUS : Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers : once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbed world;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
Loosening its mighty music; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes : then
Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.
And thou, O, Mother Earth !—

THE EARTH : I hear, I feel:
Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
And thro' my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
And birds, and beasts. and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair, shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment; to me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.

The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm : night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose :
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy :
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'

ASIA : Oh, mother ! wherefore speak the name of death ?
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die ?

THE EARTH : It would avail not to reply :
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the communicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life :
They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
And thou ! There is a cavern where my spirit
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
Became mad too, and built a temple there,
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war,
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills
With a serener light and crimson air
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of coloured light;
As they rain thro' them, and bright golden globes

Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
And thro' their veined leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
Stand ever mantling with aerial dew,
The drink of spirits : and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise ! Appear !

[*A* SPIRIT *rises in the likeness of a winged child.*]

This is my torch-bearer;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Maenad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous with most living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus; there are the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV. *A Forest. In the Background a Cave.* PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

IONE: Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!
Knowest tbou it?

PANTHEA: It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth thro' heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks thro' fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or thro' the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her,
For whence it spring it knew not, nor do I,
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH [*running to* ASIA]: Mother, dearest mother;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA: I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH: Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;
And happier too, happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,

And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world :
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Tho' fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee,)
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, tho' they slept, and I unseen,
Well, my path lately lay thro' a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it :
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;
A long, long sound, as it would never end :
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Past floating thro' the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them; and those
From whom they past seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again : and when the dawn
Came, would'st thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
Could e'er be beautiful ? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue :
All things had put their evil nature off :

I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with night-shade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;
So, with my tboughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

ASIA : And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee..

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH : What; as Asia loves Prometheus ?

ASIA : Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With sphered fires the interlunar air ?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH : Nay. mother while my sister trims her lamp,
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

ASIA Listen; look !

The [SPIRIT OF THE HOUR *enters.*]

PROMETHEUS ; We feel what thou hast heard and seen : yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR : Soon as the sound oad ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change : the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world.
My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe :
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire;
And where my moonlike car will stand within
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,

And you fair nmyphs looking the love we feel:
In memory of the tidings it has borne;
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake
The likeness of those winged steeds will mock
The flight from which they find repose. Alas,
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear ?
As I have said, I floated to the earth :
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be; I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawned, none trempled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
'All hope abandon ye who enter here;'
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew

On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round,
These imaged to the pride of kings and priests
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,—
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain amid men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,—
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed or hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man

Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise : but man
Passionless?—no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV

SCENE : *A Part of the Forest near the Cave of* PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA *and* IONE *are sleeping : they awaken gradually during the first song.*

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS :

The pale stars are gone !
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye ?

A Train of dark FORMS *and* SHADOWS *passes by confusedly, singing* :

Here, oh, here :
We bear the beir
Of the Father of many a cancelled year
Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew !
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !
Be the faded flowers

Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours !

Haste, oh, haste !
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony !

IONE :
What dark forms were they ?

PANTHEA :
The past Hours weak and gray,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE :
Have they passed ?

PANTHEA :
They have passed;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled :

IONE :
Whither, oh, whither ?

PANTHEA :
To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS :
Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee !
They shake with emotion,

They dance in their mirth.
    But where are ye ?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
    But where are ye ?

IONE : What charioteers are these ?

PANTHEA : Where are their chariots ?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS :

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
  Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
  In the deep.

A VOICE :

In the deep ?

SEMICHORUS II :

Oh, below the deep.

SEMICHORUS I :

An hundred ages we had been kept
  Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
  Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS II :

Worse than his visions were !

SEMICHORUS I :

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
  We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS II :

As the billows leap in the morning beams !

CHORUS :

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A VOICE :

Unite !

PANTHEA : See, where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS :

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds half asleep.

CHORUS OF HOUR :

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not ?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS :

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews her Daedal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears:
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all its gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS :

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS :

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight.
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS :

Break the dance, and scatter the song:
Let some depart, and some remain.

SEMICHORUS I :

We, beyond heaven, are driven along :

SEMICHORUS II :

Us the enchantments of earth retain :

SEMICHORUS I :

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea;
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be;

SEMICHORUS II :

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I :

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS II :

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS :

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
  Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong.
  The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PANTHEA : Ha ! they are gone !
IONE : Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness ?
PANTHEA : As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky !
IONE : Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound ?
PANTHEA : 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Aeolian modulations.
IONE : Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.
PANTHEA : But see where through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,

And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The oceon-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

IONE : I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne
By ebbing light into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,
Distinctly seen through that dusk aery veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunderstorm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind;
Within it sits a winged infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of aethereal pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness: in its hand
It sways a quivering moon-beam from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

PANTHEA : And from the other opening in the wood

Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning.
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aerial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

IONE : 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA : And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,

Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
Infinite mines of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythed chariots, and the emblàzonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown winged things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags: and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,
'Be not!' And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH :

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness !
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vapourous exultation not to be confined !
Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight,
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON :

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour. and deep melody
Through me, through me !

THE EARTH :

Ha ! ha ! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans; and the deserts, and the abysses,
Anc the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,—

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire :

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;

And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Burst in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball.

THE MOON :

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! It must be thine
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel. I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move :
Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :
'Tis love, all love !

THE EARTH :

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant choas, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
Which over all his kind as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious; and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its soverign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear:
Language is a perpetual Orphic song,
Which rules with Daedal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on !
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me: I have none.

THE MOON :

The shadow of white death has passed
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

THE EARTH :

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON :

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine !

THE EARTH :

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

THE MOON :

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given;
I, thy crystal paramour
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side
Like a Maenad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the weird Cadmaean forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a chameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a gray and watery mist
Glows like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow —

THE EARTH :

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight

Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm;
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

PANTHEA : I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

IONE : Ah me ! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PANTHEA : Peace ! peace ! A mighty Power, which is as darkness,
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight : the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE : There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA : An universal sound like words : Oh, list !

DEMOGORGON :
Thou, Earth, calm, empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb ! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies :

THE EARTH :
I hear : I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON :
Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beast and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony :

THE MOON :

I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee !

DEMOGORGON :

Ye kings of suns and stars, Daemons and Gods,
Aetherial Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

A VOICE FROM ABOVE :

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON :

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered —

A VOICE FROM BENEATH :

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON :

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A CONFUSED VOICE :

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON :

Spirits, whose homes are flesh : ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye having leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:

A VOICE :

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON :

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay:

A traveller from the cradle to the grave
  Through the dim night of this immortal day:

ALL :

  Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON :

This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
  And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep :
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
  Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings,
Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
  Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength,
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,[1]
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
  The serpent that would clasp her with his length,
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.
To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night:
  To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
  Neither to change, nor faulter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

* * *

CHAPTER EIGHT

Notes and Meanings of the Play

NOTE — The numbers indicate the line number of the Text.

2 *One* — The Titan himself, who defied the authority of Jupiter.

7 *Hecatombs* — Altars of public sacrifices.

9 *Eyeless in hate* — hate is a gross passion and makes one blind. Love is the source of light. The picture of Jupiter here resembles that of the God of Orthodox Christianity which Shelley hated with all the bitterness of Milton's Satan.

24 *no hope* — Shelley perhaps recalls the inscription over the gate of Dante's hell, 'abandon all hope, ye who enter here',

28 *Ever-changing Shadow* — The sea below is a copy of the sky in its blue infinity, which is generally in flux.

31-40 Shelley's letters reveal his fondness for glaciers and volcanoes. Much of this scenery comes from his personal observation, ut it is woven into the texture of the setting, 'bl ck, wintry, dead, unmeasured'.

34 *Heaven's winged hound* — The eagle or vulture in Aeschylus, daily sent to devour the liver of Prometheus, which grew again after its violent destruction.

103 *Cried 'Misery'* — Critics have been puzzled by the problem asto why Nature rings with the cry of 'Misery' on hearing the curse pronounced by Prometheus. To this the explanation we can offer is that the elements echoed the misery of the Titan of which his curse was a manifestation, and they may also have anticipated the misery resulting from the provocation the curse would certainly cause in Jupiter.

121 *Frore* — Frozen.

124 *Why scorns the spirit* ? — The query of Prometheus is a pointer to the alienation of the lovely Titan from Nature. This has resulted from his separation from Asia, who is the symbol of Love. The meaning is that perfect communion and understanding between man and natural objects around him is possible only when man approaches them with love. In the absence of love Nature becomes mute and dead and man ean

only 'murder to dissect'. Wordsworth has feelingiy underlined the fact in his sonnet : 'The World is Too Much With Us'.

135 *Inorganic voice* — Earth being the mother of the living and the dead, has two voices, one of the dead and the other of the living. She talks to the Titan in the language of the dead which he, being immortal, cannot understand.

141 *Wheel of pain* — Like Ixion in Greek mythology, who was thus punished by Zeus for daring to make love to Hera, queen of heaven.

142 *The one……I roll* — Her own axis. It is a torture because of the oppression of her children by Jupiter.

192 *Zoroaster* — Founder of the magian religion in Persia. His teachings are preserved in the holy book; *Avesta*. His religion is dualistic and posits the operation of two eternal forces — good and evil, in the universe. Shelley had a personal experience of meeting his own image at Casa Magni.

212 *Hades* — more familiarly known as Pluto, king of the other world, which is also called Hades.

Typhon — A monster of many heads aud hands, he wanted to capture heaven and was slain by Zeus.

221 *Ione and Panthea* — Sisters of Asia and interested spectators and companions of the bound Titan are taken to represent Hope and Faith respectively. Ione naturally is more timid and less perceptive than Panthea. Like the Chorus in Greek tragedy they interpret and describe the scene before them for the information of the audience.

244 *Pallid race* — The racc of the Phantoms and Shadows.

248 *Speak the words……I would hear* — The Titan's repeated insistence upon the reproduction of the exact language of his forgotten curse even after his renunciation of the hate he once harboured in his heart has puzzled the readers of the play; and the explanations offered by the critics differ widely. Milton Wilson, for example, has opined : 'Shelley is here making use of the primitive belief in the effective power of words to produce the things which they invoke. In this way he can repudiate the words themselves."

Campbell has interpreted it from two points of view, dramatic and personal :

"Shelley is treating his Prometheus as a mellowed and ennobled development from the Aeschylean Titan, that giant of resentment, impatience and contempt; the spirit in which he of old had rejoiced. Now he wishes to know the extent of his evil thoughts, that he may fully and for ever foreswear them."

Furthermore, 'Shelley wanted to curse Jupiter. Throughout his life he managed to live upto most of his doctrines of

forgiveness and love, but in the matter of cursing the tyrant he had perpetual back sliding. He knew quite well that Prometheus must no longer be allowed to curse. His clever plan of the revocation solved the problem, and he got rid of his wrath by the method of denying it."

268 *Alternate frost and fire* — One of the conventional tortures in hell, which Milton has dilated upon in Book I of *Paradise Lost.*

289 *a robe of envenomed agony* — Like the poisoned shirt of Hercules which made him mad.

292 *Heap on thy soul* — Shelley believed, like Milton, that the multiplication of ill deeds degrades the tyrant himself.

294-95 *Both infinite* — Good and Evil both are infinite as the universe and Jupiter and the solitude of Jupiter.

299 *That which ...... internally* — a hollow sham Shelley regarded Evil as a negation of good, without any substance in it.

306 *Misery, Oh Misery* — The cry of woe raised by the Earth is occasioned by her mistaken belief that the Titan's words, 'I wish no living thing to suffer pain' is symptomatic of his submission to Jupiter. The cry of the Earth is echoed by the space, which shows that the whole universe was involved in the fortunes of the heroic Titan.

324 *Serpent-cinctured wand* — The snake-twined staff of Mercury with which he shepherded the souls of the dead into the Hades.

326 *The Furries* — Known as Erinnys in Greek mythology, were the terrible spirits of revenge and nemesis, running on the track of sinners, as they do in Aeschylus' play, *The Eumenides*, where they pursue Orestes, sons of Agamemmon, who had murdered his mother to avenge the death of his father. In the same play they undergo a change and become beneficent powers under the name of Eumenides. Shelley borrows the details from Aeschylus;, but spiritualises their function.

Hydra tresses — Snaky locks. Hydra was a many headed snakes, whose heads sprang up again as soon as they were cut off. Hercules was able, in the end, to destroy it.

342 *Son of Maia* — Mercury. His father was Zeus himself.

345 *The streams of fire and wail* — The rivers Phlegethon and Cocytus in Hades or Hell. The so called Furies named by Mercury were not Furies at all, but other monsters of classical mythology.

346 *Geryon* — was a three-headed monster, slain by Hercules.

Gorgon — The name given to three female monsters, among which Medusa was best known for her power to turn any body into stone, if he happened to look at her head.

347 *Chimaera* — A monster, lion in front, goat in the middle and

snake in the lower extremities, whose nostrils breathed fire.

Sphinx — A subtle monster, with a lion's body crowned with a lovely female face, who used to ask every passerby near Thebes certain riddles and to devour all that failed to return right answers. Young Oedipus answered one of her riddles which reffered to an animal which had four feet in the morning two at noon and three feet in the evening. Oedipus identified the animal as 'Man' and the monster destroyed herself. Oedipus was hailed as the soviour of Thebet. He was crowned and married the widowed queen. In this way the decree of gods that Oedipus was destined to kill his father and marry his mother fulfilled itself. This unwitting union between Oedaipus and his mother was the 'unnatural love' which occasioned lot of suffering to the people of Thebes which is indicated by 'thse poison of heaven'. The 'more unnatural hate' was the enmitys between the sons born out of this unnatural love' — Eteoc and Polyneices, which proved fratricidal. The latter was 'morlesf unnatural' because it was deliberate, while the 'unnatural lovees was committed in ignorance. On this ill-starred house three, tragedies were composed by Sepocles, who seized the laurels from Aeschylus.

371 *There is a secret known* — The secret known to Prometheus wa the decree of fate that the child of Thetis, whom Jupiter wa eager to marry, would seize the crown from him, as he himsel had usurped the rule of heaven from his father. The secret wa part of the myth but it loses much of its significance in this play where the main emphasis is laid upon the destined hour which would bring about the fall of Jupiter.

387 *Thought-executing* — Performing their mission with the speed of thought, or putting his thought into effect.

394 *Kindness to such......Revenge* — The wicked are secretly hurt when kindness is shown to them by a sense of self-inferiority, and this inner reproach brings their revenge into constant activity. The revenge of Jupiter, thus is the outcome of his own tyranny.

396 *For what submission* — Submission will mean the disclosure of the secret which will entrench Jupiter's despotism, and its ill-consequences to mankiad—the fear of captivity hanging over man's head like the proverbial sword kept suspended by a single hair over the head of Damocles, the Sicilian courtier, under command of his despotic king, who wished to teach him the insecurity of a crowned head.

403-405 *For Justic when triumphant etc.* — Prometheus means that Jupiter would eventually be overthrown by the operation of the law of Justice or Nemesis. But this overthrow will not be a punishment in as much as Justice would weep over it more bitterly than Pity. The evil-doers are punished enough by their

own ill-deeds, and the additional punishment of Justice will be superfluous. The meaning is that the wicked are to be pitied for their self-torturing evil.

418-23 *Yet pause and plunge ...... unreprieved* — Mercury means to say that the destined fall of Jupiter may be delayed till eternity, and so will be the endless torture of the Titan, and what is eternity ? it is something beside which our recorded time is just a drop in the ocean. Human imagination cannot bring itself easily to its contemplation because it is far beyond the reach of its wildest flight. It staggers, feels giddy and sinks down in utter helplessness. Shelley uses a similar expression in *Adonais*, where he asks the mourners of John Keats to remember the immeasurable height above the earth where his soul has ascended.

429 *Self-despising slaves of Heaven* — The gods who flatter the despotic Jupiter and are thereby degraded in their own eyes.

431 *Within whose mind ...... serene* — The virtuous are warmed and illumined by the sun within them while the world outside is plunged in cold and darkness.

437 *Child of Heaven* — Mercury, son of Jupiter.

451 *Methinks I grow like what I contemplate* — The contemplation of evil has generated in him a secret sympathy with it. He has become hideous in his glee like the Furies.

470 *So from our Victim's destined agony etc.* — The Furies are the imageless powers of darkness, but become concrete and corporeal by the gloom emitted by the agony of their victim, which lies around him like an atmosphere. The dimension of the Furies is more psychological than physical.

486 *Like a vain loud multitude* — The Furies cannot affect the light of his soul, but can fill his heart with wild convulsion of conflicting passions, undermining his repose and tranquility.

522 The Furies summon to their aid darker powers of famine, ship-wreck and wide-spread destruction, and more subtle still the spirits that breed misery in the hearts of men by inducing self-contempt and fill the mind of a man with devils more numerous than the vast hell can hold. The lines of the chorus sound like magic incantation.

527 *Rapped us* — snatched us forcibly.

530 *Kingly conclaves* — Secret meetings of kings and diplomats, devoid completely of human sentiment, who barter away the lines of freedom of men for money. Shelley may be alluding to the Congress of Vienna (1814-15), but the idea is universal.

533 *From the furnace etc* — Where people are burnt alive for their views, religious or political.

539 *Tear the veil* — Reveal the vision that will tame the Titan.

This reminds us of the visions summoned by the witches before Macbeth in Shakespeare.

543 *Then was kindled within him* — The Bible says, 'One who increases his knowledge, increases his sorrow. The train of human misery was set in motion when the first man tasted the fruit of knowledge. Gray, rightly says, 'if ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise'.

546 *One came forth* — Christ. Shelley, in his earlier poetry, is bitterly critical of Christ and Christianity, no wonder that he was expelled from Oxford for advocating the necessity of atheism. But in his later poetry, as here, he shows himself to be more sympathetic to Christ, though his hostility to established Christianity is as implacable as ever before.

547 *Sanguine* — in the sense of sanguinary or bloody. Christ came to proclaim love and peace to the war-torn world.

548 *His words outlived* — Christ the preacher of love was a mortal and departed from this world. But his message remained and gave birth to a new religion, and this religion became a parent of war, slaughter and discord, turning his sweetness into poison. If his ghost were to visit this planet it will certainly weep over the havoc and fear which have been wrought in his name. Critics have drawn attention to the vision which Michael, in Miltons's great epic, unrolls before fallen Adam, to bring home to him the consequences of his sin befalling his race. Shelley is deeply indebted to Milton.

567 *A disenchanted nation* — France which witnessed with great hope the outbreak of a Revolution (1782) in the name of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, only to be disillusioned soon when the revolutionaries created a Reign of Terror which yielded place to military despotism. The failure of the French Revolution filled many intellectuals, including Wordsworth, with doubt and scepticism about the goodness of man or the fruits of noble sacrifices.

573 *'Tis another's* — It turned out to be a brood of Hate.

577 *Slaves and tyrants* —The Revolution ended in the entrenchment of depotism and slavery. Napoleon marched over the nations of Europe trampling on their liberty and respect.

590 *For men were slowly killed* — Human heart is more destructive than human hand, because it kills its victims slowly and inch by inch with its smiles as well as its hatred.

594 *Behold an emblem* — The vision of Christ on the cross is a symbol of the ultimate fate which awaits a saviour and lover of mankind in the shape of agony to him and heap of horror on his clients. The vision has a deep meaning for Prometheus, because he is a Christ-figure, put on the rack for his champion-

ship of the human cause, supported by the hope that his sacrifices will one day liberate mankind.

607 *Some hunted by foul lies* — Shelley himself was one of such victims, a Christ-like figure branded with the curse of Cain by a society which called itself Christian.

608 *An early-chosen, late-lamented home* — Shelley, it seems, is referring to the home he sits up with his first wife, Harriet. It was a foolish marriage, hastily contracted, and ending tragically with the brand of infamy on the forehead of the romantic poet, who had no option but to exile himself from the outraged English society.

609 *Ounces* — a kind of wild cats used to hunt games.

628-31 The picture of human tragedy presented here is true of the post-revolution Europe in particular, and of human society generally.

The good want power — Compare W. B. Yeat's :

The best lack all conviction, and the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

They know not what they do — Perhaps an unconscious reproduction of the words Christ addressed to God on the eve of his crucifixion, 'O Father ! They know not what they do, forgive them'.

Our worst crimes are committed in ignorance.

633 *And yet I pity those* — I pity those good men who are living among their suffering fellow men without any twinge of remorse.

645 *When they shall be no types of things which are* — After the fall of Jupiter the miseries of humanity will evaporate and their visions tormenting the mind of the Titan will simply be dark dreams of bygone things.

648-49 *Names are there* — It is the vision of the French Revolution on whose banner were blozoned forth the sacred words, Liberty, Love, Justice, Equality, Fraternity, which are the echoes of nobility of human nature.

662 *World-surrounding aether* — The atmosphere that wraps the human mind all over the world. Shelley takes the entire humanity as a single unit

728 *And I knew it was the same* — Humanity from its earliest dawns has been fed by noble dreams that kindle pity, eloquence and sorrow for those sunk in suffering.

748 *From these create he can* — The immortal creations of poets of noble dreams survive the expiration of human generations.

760 *Skiey grain* — The colour of sky.

765 *Planet-crested shape* — Love, with crest of planet Venus. The fifth spirit implies that Love itself is a mixed blessing; it has its own victims and martyrs, be it love of country, love of religion, or love of noble ideals in young minds. The sixth spirit refers to the insidious desolation which lulls the ardent minds with sweet, deceptive dreams of love, which, on waking, they find to be illusioned and are pained. Shelley himself considered a beautiful woman to be an incarnation of ideal beauty, but was soon disillusioned, as, for example, after exalting Emilia in 'Epipsychidion'.

787 *This horseman grim* — Ruin 'seated on death's winged horse'.

796 *Wisdom, Justice, Love and Peace......increase* — Whenever men struggle to increase and propagate these virtues in the world they tend to support the prophecy of these spirits that the golden age will come through the instrumentality of the suffering Titan who has pinned his faith on the destined overthrow of the Tyrant.

821 *Forgotten one* — Asia, his beloved and incarnation of Love and Beauty.

831-832 *Aether of her transforming presence* — The atmosphere created by effluence of her spirit which has transformed the rugged scene into a green, flowery vale.

833 *would fade* — Love is fed and kept alive by a receptive heart which can cherish, as the Furies,. spirits of Evil are invested with concrete forms by the agonies of their victims caused by them.

ACT II

The morning and spring season which introduce this act are broadly symbolical of the new life in the offing which is further indicated by the dream of Panthea. But it is not proper to seek symbolical meaning in every details of Asia's picture of the spring.

Scene I

3 *Unwonted tears* — This sentiment is echoed in Tennyson's 'Tears Idle Tears', where the unwonted tears are said to spring from some 'divine despair'. Asia is reminded of her happy days with Prometheus. The whole passage underlines two important characteristics of Shelley's poetical style : (a) His habit of employing a succession of similes to illustrate a single idea, and (b) His tendency to illustrate the concrete and familiar by means of what is to us abstract and unfamiliar.

16 *How like death worms* — Shelley's poetry often refers to rotling corpses, infested with crawling worms. In the present context of suspense and dullness resultant from Panthea's delay the image becomes very powerful and pregnant.

26 *Aeolian music* — aerial music. The music produced by air passing through a suspended lyre is Shelley's favourite. In classical mythology Aeolus was the god of winds.

32 *The shadow of that soul* — As the messenger of love between Asia and the bound Titan Panthea bears the imprints of both in her heart.

44-45 *the glaucous caverns* — The phrases in this description occur in Shelly's account of the observed scenery during one of his tours in Southern Italy. But Shelley can etherealise even real scenes.

50 *Since I am made the wind etc.* — Panthea is the medium through whom speechless messages pass between Prometheus and Asia. Those messages become articulate and vivid in her dream, so that her sleep is disturbed but sweet.

68-70 *Sister of her etc* — Panthea, the sister of Asia is the shadow of both the lovers.

80 *His presence flow and mingle* — Merger of two souls is a favourite idea in Shelley's poetry. He craves this with the wild west wind in his famous ode 'Be thou me, impetuous one.'

97 *But now I cannot tell thee* —Ione is a weak shadow of Panthea, whose delight has passed into her heart as a sweet but vague sensation of joy. Hope is naturally weaker than Faith.

111 *They droop beneath the load etc* — The joyful dream cannot be expressed by her eyes, which droop under its weight.

117 *Orb within orb* — Her eyes are fathomless, where 'the deep calls into the deep' and there are circles within circles.

125 *Within that bright pavilion* — The happy release of Prometheus will turn the sterile world into a garden of Paradise where Asia will sit united with him. Asia has already used a similar image :

> Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
> As from earth, clothing with golden clouds
> The desert of our life.

139-40 *as the blue bells......written grief* — Hyacinth was a handsome youth loved by Apollo, who was killed by the god's own quoit through the jealousy of his rival—god Zephyrus. Apollo changed him into the flower of that name, which has red marks on its petals resembling *Ai*, which mean 'woe' the grief of the god.

191 *A voice unspoken* —Demogorgon whose converse would brace Asia with the consciousness of Love's strength.

207 *Link thy hand in mine* — Tod hunter has aptly commented on this : "Love and Faith are becoming conscious of their powers as practical forces for the regeneration of the world, and are setting out hand in hand to accomplish this : Ione or Hope being left behind to console Prometheus.

Scene II

Scudder has observed that "from the point of the appearance of the Dream of Progress to the end of the scene Nature becomes, as it were, progressively spiritualized......in the latter part of the scene, Shelley's Hegelian conception of the gradual evolution of spiritual consciousness in the natural world finds free symbolic expression." Again, "Love and faith are pursuing their journey through all human experience; and first they pass through the sphere of senses or external life (Semichorus I); then through that of Emotions (Semichorus II) and finally, through that of Reason and Will (Semichorus III)".

40 *So sweet, that joy is almost pain* — Cf. The opening line in Keats's ode 'To a Nightingale' :

'My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains the sense.'

48-56 *And first there comes......within obey* — Scudder has interpreted this passage which describes the way in which the inspiration from Demogorgon's caves works on different categories of agents : At first there is a gentle stage of aspiration in the hearts of men quite unconscious of their mission, yet attracted and impelled by the suggestion. But these are men of insight (those who saw) who believe that the impulse which drives them on comes from the Cave of Demogorgon, though the agents believe that they are driven by the desires in their own heart. Shelley in his early poetry was a Necessitarian or fatalist, but here he refers to it as a point of view not necessarily his own.

62 *Fatal mountain* — of fate.

64 *Fauns* are the goatfooted woodland deities.

71-82 The whole description is a scientific interpretation, well-known in Shelley's age, of the origin of meteors. P. H. Butler has rightly pointed out that Shelley's description tallies with the prose account of the phenomenon in Adam Walker's *Familiar Philosophy* :

'In muddy ponds bubbles of inflammable air will rise from ponds etc in hot weather. The bubbles burst and release hydrogen gas, which ascends to the upper region and forms meteors, falling stars."

90 *Thwart silenus* — The old, irritable woodland god, master of fauns and satyrs and supposed to be the teacher of Dionysus, god of wine. He is naturally an addict to sack and falls into frequent slumbers. If he is bound and forced to sing he would sing prophetic songs.

goats undrawn — unmilked.

Scene III

3 *Like volcano's......chasm* — According to one legend mentioned by the Italian writer, Boccaccio Demogorgon lived under the volcanic mount, Etna. Shelley was deeply interested in volcano, Glacier and all the phenomena of nature symbolic of the wild, impetuous energy, which he loved as keenly as Keats loved repose.

4-10 The Cave of Demogorgon is pictured as a classical temple of Apollo or Zeus, from which oracles were delivered by inspired propheteus. But the vapour issuing out of the cave and forming its enveloping atmosphere passes into the hearts of young prophets and patriots as passion for love, liberty, justice, truth, and fills them with intoxication till, like the Maenads, the wild, drunken female worshippers of Dionysus, crying to their god with 'Evoe! Evoe', they start shouting their passionate ideal to the multitude of men till they are affected and moved to share them. Shelley believed in the magic power of the inspired word as an instrument of revolution. Compare the following

Like a poet,
Hidden/in the light of thought
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

37 *The sun-awakened avalanche etc* — In this grand natural description Shelley has drawn upon the scenery actually observed by him on Mount Blanc. The mass of snow gathered flake on flake and suddenly thawned into a rushing iceberg, has been compared to thoughts accumulated in the minds of fearless champions of freedom, which rushes out in all its collective strength as soon as some great truth catches the imagination of the world and separates itself from the mass. Such is the impact of this truth that nations are shaken to their foundations.

56 *Through the shade of sleep......throne* — Asia and Panthea are urged to advance to the very throne of Demogorgon which lies beyond the limits of the mortal life, screened by earthly things real and imaginary. They must traverse the whole space

governed by the shade of sleep and by the conflicting forces of Life and death, on their way to the kingdom of imageless Reality.

74 *Where the air is no prism* — Where the air has no light to refract into seven colours.

94 *Resist not the weakness* — She must not resist the impulse of humanity because her weakness before the Eternal (Demogorgon) can induce him to set the snake-like doom in motion to become active. The snake is a fit symbol of Doom by virtue of its slow, silent and sinuous motion.

Scene IV

20 *Which from the links of a great chain* — Such is the secret sympathy between the thoughts and passions of men that a single ill thought can gradually twine itself round other thought and form a chain of heavy fetters, under the weight of which, like a condemned convict man moves tottering towards his grave. Shelley had seen many such convicts moving in the streets of Italian cities. Readers will recall here Hamlet's comment on the drunkenness of Claudius.

32-100 The account given by Asia tallies in many details with that given by the Titan himself in the original. Shelley, however, has added moral, intellectual and spiritual benefits also.

33 *Time fell, an envious shadow* — Man became subject to time which is envious of good things.

52 *Unseasonable seasons* — Perpetual spring of the golden ages yielded place to alternate cold and hot seasons.

61 *Nepenthe, Moly and Amaranth* — are the three flowers blooming in the field of paradise. They have the three attributes of Hope : Nepenthe charms away care; Moly is an antidote against the spell of evil. It was used by Ulysses to foil the witchcraft of Circe. Amaranth is an unfading flower, a fit symbol of hope 'which springs eternal in human breast'.

69 *Iron and gold* — representing arms and wealth which symbolize the power of a person, possessing them.

73 *Which in the measure of the universe* — because human thought is greater than the universe, can easily comprehend it, or create its own universe 'Mind is its own place and can turn Hell into Heaven or Heaven into Hell.

80-84 *And human hands......and perish* — The passage describes the growth and effect of sculpture in a language rather tortuous and obscure. We shall follow the interpretation of Swinburne, a Shelley-worshipping poet and critic of the late Victorian age.

Sculpture began with the faithful imitation of human forms, and then it began to image gods and goddesses in perfect human shapes, far lovelier than mortal men and women. The result was that women with child gazing on these lovely statues transferred to their children the passion of their gaze and the loveliness of the marble forms: while men beholding their reflection in their children are consumed with love.

90 *The pale moon is transformed* — The reference is to the waving of the moon till it becomes invisible every month (inter lunar) and cannot attract the sea.

94 *And the Celt knew the Indian* — Navigation helped the European colonisers to visit India.

95 *Snow-like columns* — Refers to the rows of houses planned in such a way as to provide for free passage of fresh air and light, etc.

107 *Adversary from adamantine chains* — The reference is to the curse of Prometheus after he was chained and bound under Jupiter's command.

150 *that terrible shadow* — Demogorgon now springs up into the dark Chariot which will take him to Jupiter.

Scene V

20-26 The account of Asia's birth out of sea identifies her with classical Venus, goddess of love and of generation in Nature. Her island was Cythera, where her floating in a shell ended.

73-110 The melodious song of Asia describes the voyage of her soul from the world of Time into Eternity (a diviner day). She passes through all the stages from human death to human birth, before crossing the terminus of life into the pre-natal world of heavenly forms. She moves from the old age of frozen limbs and senses, to the stormy period of manhood, thence to the happy period of youth mocked by hope and lastly to the innocent infancy dreaming in its world of make-believe. The next step takes her beyond the bounds of Birth and Death into the Paradise of light and life, peopled with resplendent and musical spirits.

ACT III

10 *Eldest faith and......fear* — Superstition and fear of Hell which sustain the might of the despotic God.

11 *Pendulous air* — Hanging over the earth.

19 *The fatal child* — The phrase has an intense irony, because the child will prove fatal not to his victims, but to himself.

25 *Idaean Ganymede* — The cupbearer of Jove, kidnapped from Troy by his Eagle. Shelley calls him Iaean, because of his erroneous belief that he was the grandson of Idaeus.

26 *Daedal* — A favourite world in Shelley: it refers to the cunning craftsman Daedalus, the designer of the great Labyrinth at Crete. Hence the word means 'very cunningly fashioned or contrived'.

36 *Thetis* — Todhunter has well commented on the significance of this character, 'Thetis, like Asia, a child of ocean, is her false counterpart. She is a type of false ideal, the sham love and reverence which tyrants exact from their slaves......she is glory— The Tinsel happiness of the vain and selfish, which the vulgar envy'.

37-38 *When thou didst cry* — Jove in myth is represented as a voluptuous deity with many love-intrigues to his credit. But such was his might and splendour that no woman of less exalted scale of being could endure his flames in sexual union.

40 *Numidian seps* — a poisonous snake mentioned by Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, while describing the mortification of a soldier, Sabellus, who was bitten by this reptile.

52 *Direr name* — The reference may be to Necessity or Fate to when mortals and immortals were alike subject. Thus the omnipotence of Jupiter was limited and so was his reign.

60 *Of trodden worms* — very contemptuous analogy. Jupiter is likened to a worm which wriggles with pain and anger when trodden upon.

74-75 *Let hell unlock its mounded oceans* — A typical instance of the psychology of a tyrant, who is so egoistical and self-centred that he would suffer nothing to survive his destruction.

80 *Ai ! Ai !* — Woe, woe. Exclamations of painful grief.

Scene II

Atlantis — mentioned by Plato in his last, unfinished dialogue, *Critias*, as an island where a society of pure and innocent human beings once flourish. Hence, Atlantis came to be associated with ideal common wealth, uncorrupted by the vices of civilization, that is, love of gold and luxury.

Apollo and Ocean are conversing about the fall of Jupiter, and through it Shelley describes what he could or did not present dramatically.

3 *Orb I rule* — Apollo is sun-god.

4 *The terrors of his eye* — This passage and the image of struggling Eagle, the bird of Jupiter, effectively convey the vigour and intensity of the conflict between Jupiter and Demogorgon. Even then the critical faculty is not satisfied, because, if Jupiter fell under the frown of Demogorgon, like a writhing worm, there was no question of any fierce struggle. The whole description is, therefore, decorative.

24 *Proteus* — A sea-god, known as the old man of the sea, who changed his form constantly and had the gift of prophecy. Ulysses could bind and fix him to know his future through his prophecy. He used to blow his couch-shell to collect the sea fishes. The *humid nymphs* are the sea nymphs living in the element of water, hence 'humid'.

27 *With that white star* — A mythological explanation of the star that accompanied the moon in the sky.

40 *Thy steeds will pause at even* — Critics have pointed out that throughout this scene Shelley has forgotten his science and submitted to the old mythological beliefs that the sun drives in a chariot and rests in the evening. But when the objects of nature are introduced to talk like human beings they would certainly not talk in the spirit of science.

48 *unpastured sea* — hungry and unfed sea, which was 'fed with azure calm, or with emerald calm'. Shelley has successfully recaptured the primitive mythopoeic imagination or vision in this speech.

Scene III

Hercules : A character from the Prometheus legend who liberated the Titan from his 'adamantive rivets.' But in Shelley's play he has become merely decorative, because the bound Titan is unbound as soon as his tyrant has sunk into the abyss.

5 *Asia* — Asia, the beloved of Prometheus, is at once a dramatic character, a creature with life and emotion, and a symbol of the Platonic idea, and Shelley emphasizes the one or the other aspect as the particular situtaion requires. As she reaches the cave of Demogorgon, she is filled with a desire to worship the grounds like an ordinary living person. But here the emphasis falls upon her symbolic aspect as Symonds has finely observed. 'She is the idea of beauty incarnate, the shadow of the Light that sustains the world and enkindles it with love......the breathing image of that awful loveliness, which is apostrophied in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, the reflex of the splendour of which Adonais was a part'. Shelley believed that

the universe was penetrated, sustained and vitalized by a spirit which he called Love or Beauty, of which the human goodness, love and beauty were the temporal manifestions. His conception was based on the idealistic philosophy of Plato, which colours this whole scene.

26-29 *And if ye sigh...to shed.* — A very sentimental picture, a sort of anti-climax. The saviour of mankind will sink into a state of refined epicureanism.

33 *Like human babes.* — They will remain in a state of perpetual childhood.

42-44 *From every flower......in Himera* — The reference is to the flowery vale in Sicily, where Proserpina was picking flowers when Pluto seized her by force and kidnapped her into the Hade. Perdita in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* makes a feeling reference to the flowers which Proserpina must have left there. Himera, a river on the side of a town of the same name in Sicily.

49-54 *And lovely apparitions......immortal* — The meaning is that an inferior artist imitates the beauties of the earth which are only shadows of the heavenly Beauty, which is real. With the advent of the golden age the purged eyes of poets, painters and sculptors will be able, with growing clarity, to penetrate through these shadows to the real Beauty of which they are copies. Thus their works will become imperishable as images of immortal Beauty and visions of these will float to the Titan and his associates. The conception is Platonic.

58 *The wandering voices and the shadows these* — The vision of artistic products, reflecting the progress of man since the fall of tyranny, are really the messengers of love subsisting between man and his saviour, the Titan, who taught them and suffered long to redeem them from slavery. This love is the best kind of worship.

62 *And, veil by veil, evil and error fall* — Shelley believed that the change would be automatic and involuntary not slow and painful, waxing and waning as the human struggle flows and ebbs. This gives to the whole conception of this revolution the air of dreamy, sentimental and almost childish idealism.

65-66 *that curved shell......nuptial boon* — Hughes has remarked, 'The shell contains the virtue that proceeds from the marriage and its music diffuses this virtue through the world'.

105 *And death shall be the last embrace* — Death will become painless and sweet, like the embrace of a mother to her child.

113 *Death is the veil......lifted* — Following the fundamental tenet of Platonic philosophy Shelley believed that things heavenly are real while earthly things and earthly life itself are illusory. Death is a sleep in the world of illusions and a waking in the

world of realities. What we call life on this earth is like a painted curtain in a theatre, which is lifted by death to reveal the real actors and agents of the play. The idea is a favourite with Shelley. In *Adonais* he boldly says that 'Peace, peace, he is not dead':

> Life like a dome of many-coloured glass
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity
> Till death tramples it underfoot.

127 *Built a temple there* — Attempts have been made to identify this temple as the temple of Prometheus which was said to have stood near Plato's Academy. The Earth also mentions a neighbouring cave, which is identified with one at Colonus, where Oedipus retired to expiate his sins, the Earth says that the inspiration of the prophets was unhealthy and foul, hence the oracles uttered by them tended to foment strife and treachery in the nations. About the oracles uttered by the inspired Priestress at Delphi and other places there is a general complaint that they were often obscure, puzzling and ambiguous.

130 *Faithless faith* — A faith which is honoured by breach.

150 *on eyes......anew* — Eyes of Asia, embodiment of love, which lights the world.

154 *Bacchic Nysa* — Bacchus or Dionysus, god of wine, was supposed to have been nursed at this mountain.

Maenads — were the fierce female worshippers of Bacchus.

165 *Praxitelean shapes* — Statues of Praxiteles, the celebrated Greek sculptor of 4th century B.C. Shelley saw two of his surviving statues at Rome and praised them for their divine loveliness and irresistible energy.

167-70 *Once it bore thy name......emblem* — The reference is to the race run by enthusiastic young men, with torches in hand. Prometheus was the bringer of fire from heaven to the dark earth, and he bore the torch of hope triumphantly through the dark days of tyranny and intense personal agony. He inspires men to bear the lonely torch of hope through dark life to their graves.

Scene IV

19 *As one bit by Dipsas* — Dipsas was the name of a variety of serpent whose bite induced an unquenchable thirst in the victim.

47 *Ugliest of all things evil* — because beauty, tenderness and love are the native qualities of women. Evil in them looks ugliest.

64-68 *and soon......scattered them* — Scudder has well commented on this picture of sudden transformation : "The idea of progressive development was unknown to the men of Revolution. In their thought, salvation was to be reached by a sudden overthrow of tyranny rather than by a slow and constructive up-building. The ideal state, when reached, was to be one of stagnant and empty enjoyment, rather than one of continual advance through struggle. All development is conditioned by law, and the thought of law was abhorrent to them."

80 *Azure halcyons etc* — These birds are symbols of peace and innocence. But what is remarkable about them here is their change from fish-eating to fruit-eating creatures. Shelley himself was a vegetarian.

95-96 *Nay, mother......darkling* — Love born in the heart of its sister will kindle love in its own heart.

112 *Phidian forms* — The Statues by Phidias, the famous Greek sculptor of 5th century B. C.

116 *Fretted with graven flowers* — decorated with flowers engraved on its surface.

135 *Gate of Hell* — The inscription over the gate of Dante's *Inferno*, which Milton also underlines in his description of hell in *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

139-141 *Until the subject......abject of his own* — A play on the sound of 'subject' and 'abject'. Shelley means that a man cowed down by tyranny, develops a feeling of self-contempt, and trots like a weary horse to his grave.

142 *None wrought his lips......to speak* — A fine picture of smiling hypocrites who suggest the falsehood their tongue dares not utter by their smile.

144-48 *None, with firm sneer hideous ill* — The picture of sneering men who destroy the instincts of love and hope in their own hearts, and then move among men with their sneering tongues corrupting and consuming the souls of others also, and thus turning them to their own ugly image, as the vampire (the spirit of a dead criminal) was supposed to do with its victims.

150 *Which makes the heart......no name* — The false, cold, hollow talk in which a person does not reveal the truth cherished by his heart. and with indescribable cowardice fails to question the hypocrisy involved in his behaviour.

166 *Tomes of reasoned......ignorance* — Huge books on law, religion and philosophy, written to paint falsehood as truth and interpreted by ignorant one.

170 *unworn obelisks* — The reference is to the Egyptian pillars brought home by Roman conquerors, which though antique barbaric, still survive and look down upon the decaying Roman

palaces and tombs.

180 *Those foul shapes* — Ugly emblems of tyranny in its various forms, of which Jupiter was the fountain-head.

185-86 *Love......garlandless* — Reference may be to the execution on the charge of adultery, a form of love, solid by law. Shelley was of the opinion that to divide love was not to diminish it, and any attempt to fetter it by law was to befoul it.

190 *The painted veil* — The forms and corrupt customs which concealed the true nature of man. 'Veil' or 'painted' curtain is a favourite image in Shelley. Just as earthly life in a 'veil' which hides the realities of heaven, in the same way ugly customs and conventions, emblematic of the false beliefs and ideals of human beings are the veil with clumsy pictures which hide the goodness and nobility of men which are natural to them. The statement involves two assumptions: (a) man is good and perfectible by nature; and (b) falsehood and corruption are only external distortions, which being on the surface of human character will easily be cast off as soon as man musters up the strength of his will. In one of the verses that follow Shelley clearly states that pain or guilt attached to human passions because man's 'will made or suffered them."

201 *Chance, and death and mutability* — But man even in his perfect state will remain man, a creature subject to death, change and operations of chance. They are the necessary clogs to his wings, keeping him confined to the bounds of the earth. Without them he will soar up to a dizzy height in heaven beyond the sphere of the loftiest star.

ACT IV

The spirits sing in light, tripping measures, in shifting melodies characteristic of their airy nature.

1 *The pale stars are gone* — It is the description of sun-rise.

10 *The bier......year* — The dark days of tyranny now dead.

14 *We bear time* — not time in general, but time of man's slavery and oppression.

26 *Children of a diviner day* — Hours of happy life.

34 *One* — Prometheus, who uses the same expression about himself in his opening speech of the play.

73 *Hungry Hours* — destructive hours of man's slavery, when the sun appeared to be flying for cover.

77 *Weave the mystic measures* — Like the witches in Macbeth.

112-113 *From the temples high etc* — Human Eye and Ear are temples inhabited by powers which provide materials to poetry and sculpture.

114-116 *From murmurings etc* — From the haunts of those secrets in Nature which Science, with her skill and subtle art endeavour to discover.

140 *Which clips......darkness* — The reference is to the shadow cast by the Earth.

207 *Mother of the months* — Moon.

209 *Interlunar dreams* — Refers to the period when the moon is invisible — the last day of the dark half of the month.

220-36 The whole description of the sphere of the moon is a fine example of Shelley's exquisite skill to render the facts of science in delicate poetry. Here we have the blend of the vision of a child and the curiosity of an abservant scientist. All the features of the lunar orb are present here.

238-61 The picture of the sphere of Earth given here has been cleverly interpreted in scientific term by an ingenious critic. According to this interpretation the thousands of 'spheres' or 'orbs' are the atoms, 'each consisting of a series of concentric electron shells (sphere within spheres), and each interlinked with the sphere close to it, 'the unimaginable shapes' are thə stray electrons that drift through the space between the 'music and light' of line 3 is the 'flow of radiation', 'they whirl over each other' refers to their constantly changing positions, as they go on spinning on 'a thousand sightless axles'. 'The force of self-destroying swiftness' can be recognised as the vibration'.

'Among the radiations issuing from the orbs there is one now known as 'the super' ray which reveals to Panthea the mysteries of the earth's interior, and penetrating time exposes 'the melonchy ruins of cancelled cycles', the details of which are reminiscent af Keat's *Endymion*. The theory of Evolution is clearly hinted at, though Shelley mixes it with a freedom so characteristic of him with the cataelysmic theory about the idea of the annihilation of the world by a flood or the fiat of some God in a comet.

260 *Seem kneaded into one aerial mass* — an interesting example of 'huminous music' which supports Newton's theory that the seven colours in the spectrum correspond with the seven notes in music, so that music and light can blend.

269 *mocking......harmony* — imitating the musical motion of the spinning spheres. Or we may take 'mock' in the sense of 'scoffing at' and say that the artless simplicity of a child-like spirit ironically smiles at the intricacies of the interlinked and complex orbs.

272 *Tyrant-quelling myrtle* — Martle Crown was for Greek, an emblem of victory, including the victory over a tyrant.

289 *Cancelled cycles* — Remains of creatures which disappeared gradually in course of the evolutionary process. Here, of course, the relics of old civilizations now buried in the earth.

298 *Mortal, but not human* — Men who had lost all human virtues: the result was the destruction of the vast city; or Titan-like mortals but unhuman. This is supported by their relics described in lines that follow.

303 *Isles of living scale* — huge like an island (like ancient Whales.)

307 *Tortuous......pangs* — The agony of death made them cling round the crags with such a force that they were powdered into a heap of dust.

321 *vaporous exultation* — Joy that is exhaled like vapour by the Earth.

338 *Sceptred curse* — The reign of Jupiter, which was a curse.

380 *Thought's stagnant chaos* — Tyranny had benumbed the thought, which now has been liberated and animated by love.

389 *healing springs* — Like Bath and other places where mineral water had healing property.

396 *compelling...stress* — subduing the element with his knowledge: the source of his compelling might.

408 *A spirit ill to guide* — Will unregulated is dangerous, but kept under control is a source of strength. It is a bad master and good servant.

414 *Bright threads......wear* — Marble statues provide to mothers golden dreams about what their children should be. The child in the womb is shaped by its mother's dreams.

415 *Orphic song* — magically musical like the song of Greek Orpheus, which moved stones and melted the iron heart of Pluto.

416 *Which rules with Daedal harmony* — Thoughts and emotions, chaotic and lifeless otherwise, become vital, definite and permanent where the poet imposes on them his intricate pattern of significant words, sense plus sound.

444-47 *Pyramid of night* — The shadow cast by the earth into sunlit space, 'Heavens dreaming delight' is the sun's light brooding over the sleeping earth.

450 *As......dull* — The moon takes the shadow of the earth as the darkness into which the mind and senses are plunged as the lovers' lips close and their souls are united. The loving moon has undergone this eclipse through the ecstasy of her union with the Earth.

The last song of the Moon is the finest example of the beauti-

ful skill with which Shelley described scientific facts and phenomena in poetic terms.

464 *Polar Paradise* — Like the attraction between the poles of the magnet, which is a fit analogy for the attraction between the eyes of lovers.

473-475 *Like a Maenad etc.* — Agane, daughter of Cadmus and a worshipper of Dionysus, the god of wine, who tore her son to pieces in her frenzy, because he was opposed to this kind of worship. Here Moon's passion for the earth is equated with a Maenad's passion for a cup of wine.

477 *I must hurry* — The moon being Earth's satellite.

487 *Until its hue grows* — A fine description of the new moon which holds the shadow of the earth (the old moon) in its arms, as Coleridge has finely put it.

492-493 *Upon its snow* — The sentence is completed by the Earth, to show his oneness with the moon.

499-503 *Thy crystal accents pierce* — The gentle love accents sink like a balm upon the heart of the Earth, wounded by his fierce, proud joy.

508 *You pretend to rise out of it* — Ione thinks that Panthea herself is the source of the soothing music.

517 Demogorgon speaks here like God addressing the whole creation in a voice, sounding like thunder and sending a shiver, as it were, through all the creatives of the cosmos. There is a sober sublimity about his lyrical utterances which bring to a grand finale. The myriad-throated joy which bursts out of the universe with the fall of tyranny and liberation of the champion of human freedom, dignity and sovereignty of Love.

534 *Ye happy Dead......portray* — Even the best poetry can but dimly describe the Dead.

536-38 *Whether your nature......pass away* — The question is whether the dead are still retaining the spirit of the concept human world which they knew in their life time or they have been swept away along with the corruption they had left behind. The reply is that along with the dead world they are also passing away.

552 *Dim night* — The dark period of slavery and death.

555 *Earth-born* — Prometheus, The Titan.

553 *Co Love from......springs* — 3 varieties of love : (a) Love enthroned in the patient heart of the wise; (b) Love in the heart of a person driven to the verge of endurance; and (c) Love on the point of slipping down in the mind in a state of extreme agony.

565-66 *And if......his length* — If time, in its infinite length produces an hour when the snake-like evil is loosened and man is oppressed by it.

569 *disentangled doom* — The snake of doom loosened by Eternity. It means that Evil cannot be permanently banished from mankind. So man must have the antidote against its poison and make himself proof against its bite by arming himself with virtues which Demogorgon commends in this memorable passage.

"What an offence against the inner logic of the three unities in a play which begins with Prometheus and Furies in time and Caucasus and ends with the Sun and the Moon in Elysium and Eternity !"

When Shelley unbinds his Prometheus his drama falls out to bits, and his stage becomes a chaos. The real actors are crowded out of it, while portions of the scenery, the full orchestra and flashing lights make glorious havoc of the whole, till at length Demogorgon restores order—and dramatic harmony—with his sublime perforation, and the curtain falls."

But Shelley has been defended also by critics like Bowra, who observes, "Act IV is necessary to Shelley's design if he is to say all that he has in mind about the various spiritual forces which govern life. *Prometheus* is so much a drama of ideas that he has no very great place for action and the dramatic interest is continually sacrificed to other more urgent needs." In this view the protagonist of the play is Millennium, which is so bright and nebulous that its effect can be conveyed by music, a harmony of diverse melodies, raised by a host of jubilant cieatures which the visionary eyes of Shelley could descry in the known and unknown spaces of the universe.

Shelley himself was intoxicated with this vision, so like Ariel, the Shakespearean spirit of air and fire, he assumed myriad shapes, Spirits of different categories, Earth, Moon and Demogorgon, to pour down his full-throated strains of unpremediated art, which come down in sparkling floods 'like light dissolved in star-showers thrown'—till the entranced reader cries with Panthea—'I arise as from a bath of sparkling water./A bath of azure light, among dark rocks, Out of the stream of sound'.

It is only after the lapse of this spell that our sneaking critical faculty murmurs timidly—'too good to be true', but imagination silences it with the words of Browning : 'Have some joy to die with dim-descried'.

CHAPTER NINE

Questions and Answers

Q. 1 Would you agree with the statement that in *Shelley's* philosophy there is no bridge between the actual state of misery and 'the new glad world' that is to come ? Illustrate your answer from the text.

Ans. Shelley's philosophy was drawn from different sources, from Godwin, from Plato and Aristotle, from the French thinkers who believed in the idea of Progress. But this composite philosophy was based on certain convictions, such as the concept of the perfectibility of man, of the instability of evil, of the working of an inherent law which is automatically driving things forward from the darkness of the earth to the light of heaven.

Shelley's first important poem, *Queen Mab*, is based mainly on Godwin's *Political Justice* and contains the first rough outline of his concept of Millennium. Queen Mab, a light, airy, radiant being of of Shelley's spiritual world, outlines here the entire course of human destiny on this planet. She glances at the past glories of various empires, headed by crowned tyrants, whose thrones rested upon the misery and torture of their human slaves.

Once peace and freedom blest
The cultivated plain :
But wealth that curse of man,
Blighted the bud of its prosperity.

But the eternal world contains at once the evil and its cure'. This eternal law is called 'Necessity', the working of which is manifested in eminently vitreous men, the truth of whose purc lips can bind 'the scorpion falsehood with a wreath of ever-living flame, until the monster sting itself to death'. As soon as evil has destroyed itself the Millennium will dawn upon the universe and the earth will be peopled with purest spirit, and man, co-operating with the spirit of nature will undertake the work of regeneration.

Shelley moved from Godwin to Plato, whose idealism finds expression in *Adonais*. In this poem Shelley refers to the eternal principle operative in the universe as One, and this One is the creative principle of spiritual evolution. This plastic principle sweeps through the dull, dense world compelling there a new succession of forms, clothed in the beauty, strength and light of heaven.

This idea of continual, automatic progress is dramatised in his lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound* which begins with an elaborate picture of the tortures of the bound saviour of mankind and the abject slavery, corruption and degradation of man, trampled upon by the iron heels of Jupiter, the divine despot and fountain head of all the evils in the world. At the other extreme we are given an equally graphic picture of the happy universe pinged of all evil and ugliness and of the earth peopled by men and women, shining in all the glory of their native dignity, beauty and purity, knit together by love and guided by the inner law of their own perfect being.

But it is the middle part, connecting the beginning and the end which is weak and logically unconvincing. It is the most crucial part because it is concerned with the transition from the miserable present to the happy future. It ought to have been replete with conflict, the life-and-death struggle between the resolute good and the equally determined and desperate evil. In the philosophy of Shelley, however, evil was negative and rootless and man had only to will that there should be no evil in order to bring about its dissolution. From the very beginning of the play we are expected to remember that the fall of Jupiter is destined to take place at one particular hour, before which all human action would be ineffectual. What is necessary is not the human struggle, but the awakening of the goodness and nobility latent in the nature of man.

Thus the noble Titan is gradually humanised by his long suffering : his heart is punged of hate and he wishes no body to suffer pain: and he pities the tyrant himself whose wickedness has enslaved him and who is destined to fall eventually and stand before him as a suppliant willing to kiss his wounded and bleeding feet. This inner change enable, him to conquer the insidious power of the Furies, and to realize that love must join him to complete the conquest of evil. The result is his sudden transfiguration seen by Panthea in her dream and reported by her to Asia, symbol of Love. While Asia is meditating upon this happy dream they are summoned by unseen powers to follow the difficult route to the dark cave of Demogorgon, the mysterious power at the heart of the universe which impels the good to be instrumental in the destruction of the evil. The song of the spirits which guides Asia and Panthea, clearly underlines the fact that the music which fills the valley over the cave of Demogorgon:

> Attracts impels them; those who saw
> Say from the breathing earth behind
> There breathes a plume-uplifting wind
> Which drives them on their path, while they
> Believe their own swift wings and feet
> The sweet desires within obey.

After Asia had realized her strength and her value in this struggle we are led to expect that she would proceed actively to undo the power evil and appression. But we find that it is Demogorgon who is taken to the court of Jupiter to destroy him with his frown.

This complete elimination of human initiative and responsibility in the struggle against evil not only robs the play of its dramatic vitality, but makes the middle of the play weak and tenuous.

The last message of Demogorgon suggests that evil is a recurrent phenomenon in the life of the race, against which the only safeguard for man is the cultivation of those qualities which may be called Promethean.

As a matter of fact this was the fundamental weakness of the romantic philosophy of man's perfectibility and of continual progress towards perfection. The idea finds expression in Keats's *Hyperion*; where the overthrow of the old Saturn by Jupiter, head of a new generation of gods, is thus interpreted by oceans :

'Tis the ęternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might.

They themselves were elevated by this law, and their defeat also is in perfect keeping with its spirit :

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in 'beauty;

And by that very law, another race may drive :
'Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.

For people of sober mind who believe in logic and in hard facts as well as in the necessity of human endeavour, so uncertain in its efficacy, to combat and overcome evil, this optimistic philosophy of Shelley and Keats is bound to appear as adolescent, immature and incoherent, remote, as it is, from the actual experience of life and from the records of history which deals with the tragic fates of human saviours, Socrates, Christ, the leaders of the French revolution and Gandhi. Yet these are thinkers and writers, like George Bernard Shaw, who, fired by the possibilities inherent in Darwin's theory of Evolution, have seriously proclaimed that the Law which produced Man, when the monkey proved to be inadequate, may proceed to to the creation of the Superman when man fails to fulfil its aim.

In this way man has been deluded by hope, yet

Hope springs eternal in the human breast
Man never is but always to be blest.

Q. 2. Write a note on Shelley's mythopoeic or myth-making power with special reference to Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. Myth-making power means the power of presenting the forces of nature and the distract ideas or phantoms of the imagination as living human beings instinct with the power of motion, of speech, of action and emotion of the creatures of flesh and blood. By virtue of this power the primitive man humanised the strange, beautiful, terrible and mysterious universe around him, and filled it with gods and demons amenable to his prayers and sacrifices. The

power is still present in children, and as the romantic age in England was a renascence of wonder, or the revival of the child-like vision it is no wonder if the poets of the age, Coleridge, Shelley aud Keats proved to be myth-makers.

Shelley's myth-making power is best seen in his lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*, which is concerned with the regeneration of the whole universe, demonstrating the interpenetration of the world of man and the worlds surrounding it, including the celestial realms of sun, moon and numerous constellations of stars with wandering planets and meteors. Apart from the figures half-human and half-symbolic, Prometheus, Jupiter, Asia, Mercury, Panthea and Ione, we have a host of spirits, light, radiant and musical, which people the universe enveloping the main figures, moving and singing with human voices.

Take the case of the Earth, mother of the Titan, who watches him in agonised suspense and responds to the various emotions generated by the moods of her bound son, who is the flesh of her own flesh, as it were. When the Titan says that he hates no more and wishes no body to suffer, she mistakes it for his capitulation and cries out in agony of passion :

> Misery, O misery to me,
> That Jove at length should vanquish thee.

She gives a long account of her reaction to the birth and the misfortunes of her beave son, how when he rose from her bosom, like a cloud of glory, joy ran through every part of her sphere like blood through a living frame and how when he was bound and put on the the rack by the Almighty Tyrant her 'wan brest was dry' and plague and famine befell the animal and vegetable creation.

After his liberation when Prometheus calls, 'O Mother Earth' she at once responds :

> I hear, I feel;
> Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down
> Even to the adamantine central gloom
> Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy
> And through my withered old and icy frame
> The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down.

The personalisation of the Earth here is an example of the initial stage in the mythopoetic process, because the Earth is still deeply rooted in its natural envrionment; we still recognize her as our familiar planet.

But when we come to the consideration of the second pair of mother and son, Asia and the spirit of the Earth we have entered a remote and ethereal realm, where the figures have become independent of their natural moorings. Panthea describes the spirit as a delicate creature, the guide and torch-bearer of the Earth who, before Jove reigned, loved her sister Asia and came to her each leisure hour to drink the liquid light out of her eyes. It made to her

its childish confidence and told her all it had known and seen, and called her 'Mother'. At this stage the spirit comes running to Asia with the joyful cry of 'Mother, dearest mother' and inquires if it may hide its eyes in her soft arms and play beside her in long noons and talk to her about its experiences. Encouraged by her loving words it says that it has grown wiser, though a child, and proceeds to give its long account of the changes and transformations it has witnessed in the human world in the wake of the overthrow of Jupiter.

Asia assures the spirit that they will live together till its sister, who guides the frozen and inconstant moon, is smitten with love for it, and craves union with it. The child-like spirit inquires 'What! as Asia loves Prometheus ?' and Asia replies, with a mild banter in her tone, that it is not yet old enough to think that simply by gazing on each other's eyes they cannot multiply their lovely selves and fill the atmosphere with fiery orbs.

The spirit of the moon is pictured as a winged infant, of white face, white plumes, gleaming white limbs, bright white hairs with two eyes filled with liquid darkness, which out of their arrowy lashes, tempers the cold and radiant air around, with fix that is not brightness. It sways a quivering moon beam, from whose point a guiding power directs the chariot's prow over its wheeled clouds.

In the long duct between the Earth and the Moon, this child, like a love-laden, delicate girl thinks to the depth of her bosom as the warm waves of joy shoot up from the planet guided by her brother spirit :

Some spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody.
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate maid.

Among the briefer pictures of such personalised forces of nature the most remarkable is that of the two Fauns, which are sitting like two shepherds talking about the birth of meteors and of Silenus, whose lovely songs of Fate, Chance, Chaos, Love and of bound Titan's woeful doom cheer their twilight loneliness. Similarly among the Phantoms humanised by Shelley the most noteworthy are the Phantom of Jupiter, which repeats the Titan's curse, and Demogorgon who appears to interpret the meaning of the Titan's life and action.

Q. 3. Illustrate from Prometheus Unbound Shelley's practice of presenting scientific ideas in poetic terms.

Ans. Shelley's keen interest in scientific facts, discoveries and inventions have been noted by his students, critics and biographers, and Carl Garbo has gone so far as to call him a Newton among the poets. Science attracted him as an effective instrument for the disccveries of the mysteries of the universe, as well as for taming nature and harnessing her energies to promote human welfare and happiness. No wonder, therefore, if his poetry abounds in passages of poetic beauty and felicity of expression but based upon the scientific fact and discoveries. Sometimes he seems to be simply paraphrasing a passage occurring in a well-known scientific work. In Act II, for example, while Asia and Panthea are pursuing their journey to the dark cave of Demogorgon, impelled by the voices wandering before them, two Fauns are talking about the home of these spirits which leads to the explanation of the process which results in the birth of the meteors. And P. H. Butler has rightly pointed out a complete gloss of this passage can be found in Adam Walker's *Familiar Philosophy*, a popular hand-book of the day. Consider the following extract :

> 'When the bubbles which the sun sucks from plants come out of the water they burst and the hydrogen they contain being very light, ascends to the upper air, which is heavily charged with electricity, and there ignites and appears as meteors or falling stars. In muddy ponds bubbles of inflammable air will rise from the mud'.

In Act IV we have elaborate descriptions of the spheres of Earth and Moon, which, as Desmond King-Hele has shown, can be interpreted in the light of the modern discoveries.

Panthea describes the sphere of the earth as consisting of "ten thousand orb, involving and involved, and each inter-transpicuous: and they whirl over each other with a thousand motions."

They are according to the above critic, individual atoms, each consisting of a series of concentric electron shells, with the outermost shells of neighbouring atoms interlinked. *The unimaginable shapes* are the stray electrons, which drift through the space between the atoms. *Through all its mun flow music and light.*—It is the flow of radiation which the electrons emit on changing their energy-levels.

The atoms rotate on their axes, and constantly change their positions. *The force of self-destroying surftness* may refer to the vibration. *The luminous music* reminds us of Newton's theory regarding the correspondence between the seven colours in the spectrum and seven notes in music.

The light on the forehead of the Earth spirit which reveals to Panthea the buried contents in the bowels of the Earth may be taken as the super X-Ray, one of the radiations issuing from the orb.

The same critic has commented upon the scientific accuracy in the poetic description of the orb of moon : 'All the main features of the moon's face are here translated into human features. The obvious first impression of the moon as normally seen is silver whiteness unrelieved by warmer colours. It is indicated by the keywords, 'white' and 'bright', relieved only by 'dark', *the wind-flowing folds* are the straggling, corrugated lunar mountain-ranges. *The eyes of liquid darkness* are the craters of the moon. They are called liquid because the patches of moon were called 'seas' by Galileo (discoverer of the telescope).

Shelley goes on to imagine the darkness of the eyes pouring itself out in radiation which tempers the cold air around with fire that is not brightness. He is referring to infra-red rays, the 'dark heat rays' discovered by Herschel in 1800.

The antiphonal songs represent the Moon as a love-sick maiden, spinning round the Earth through the space. Throughout this elaborate passage Shelley has underlined only those features of the moon's motion which confirm his equation of love with gravitation. Thus, she always presents the same face to the Earth, as if she were gazing on him with loving eyes. She not only looks at, but also spins round him through the space although the sun's gravitational pull is twice as strong as that of the Earth. In her intense love the moon grows in here like her lover, the Earth, which is only a poetic expression of the familiar phenomenon which Coleridge has well described as 'the old moon in new moon's arm'—the moon clothing herself with the shadow of the earth.

Even the thrill of warmth shooting from the earth and penetrating the cold heart of the moon, so that her snowy mountain thaw and melt, may be associated with a familiar scientific speculation. Thus, Erasmus Darwin, who, in his *Botanic Garden*, sought to effect the union of poetry, science and myth. speculated that the increased heat in the moon radiated by sun and earth may create an atmosphere there and put an end to its cold barrenness. Adam Walker also speculated on the possibility of such a development, because the Earth's own atmosphere was produced by the heat radiated by the sun.

The final response of the Earth that his proud lacerated heart is pierced and soothed by the crystal accents of the moon will find an echo in every human heart which has been charmed and soothed by the mild radiance of the silver moon.

Q. 4. The Fauns and Spirits in Prometheus Unbound do not belong to any accepted mythology,. but they give mythological embodiments to Shelley's thought. Elucidate with reference to Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. Shelley adapted the myth of Prometheus from the Greek play, *Prometheus Bound*, by Aeschylus, and changed it so radically

that he practically re-created the old myth in the light of his philosophy of the golden age. At the same time he introduced a new supernatural machinery which does not belong to any accepted cycle of mythology, but is a neo-creation, and supplies a body of supernatural beings as witnesses to the action, which keeps us constantly in mind of the fact that the play is not concerned merely with the liberation of the Titan and his protege, the mankind, but with the whole world.

The spirits, appearing at several stages, in the action of the play, represent crucial ideas or points of view which are dramatically important. Thus, in the first Act the Furies which are brought in as a new instrument of torture to blast the hope of Prometheus about the efficacy of the forces of the good in their struggle with those of Evil, are the symbol of death and despair. They show two visions to the bound Titan—the vision of the French revolution which arose with the slogan of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Truth, Love and Justice, but degenerated into a reign of blood and terror, and, in the end, tyrants rushed in to divide the spoil.

The second vision relates to Christ nailed to the Cross, with blood running down from his wounds, whose religion gave birth to a number of a hypocritical monsters, hunters of the good and virtuous for being like him, and promoters of war and strife in the world, with manslaughter and destruction of cities and towns. After this they turn to the Titan and remark tauntingly:

> Behold an emblem: those who do endure
> Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
> Thousand fold torment on themselves and on him.

The Titan is naturally dejected and envies the mortals who find peace in the grave, which he, being a god, cannot find.

To console him his Mother Earth summons a lot of spirits 'whose homes are the dim caves of human thought; they behold, beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass, the future'. Their songs present the other side of the picture, the triumph of good over evil, to balance the gloomy visions conjured up by the Furies.

They have come to make a prophecy which begins and ends with the Titan; they sing of love and hope; of the ship-wrecked mariner who gave his plank to his drowning enemy, of the dream of a sage 'which had kindled, long ago, pity, eloquence and woe. They conclude their chant with :

> Wisdom, Justice, Love and Peace
> Are to us as soft winds be
> To shephered boys, the prophecy
> Which begins and ends with thee.

In Act II while Asia and Panthea are talking about the dream of transformation of the Titan, spirit voices start calling upon them to follow, follow, and all through their journey the spirit songs

guide them and urge them on the cave of Demogorgon. These spirits, again, stand for the forces of the good in the universe which lend support to the endeavours of men to end the tyranny of evil. Their songs are soul-inspiring for they give a direction and purpose to the journey of Love and Faith, who are activated by their words :

> Down, down !
> With the bright form beside thee;
> Resist not the weakness,
> Such strength is in meekness
> That the Eternal, the immortal,
> Must loose through life's portal
> The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne;

The Spirits which lead the chorus of jubilation in the final act stand for what Shelley meant by the regeneration of the world in the golden age. In the beginning come the 'past Hours weak and gray, with the spoil which their toil raked together', which bear the bier of Time to his tomb in eternity. They gradually meet away from heaven's blue waste before 'the children of a diviner day'.

They are followed by the Spirit of the human mind, now purged and perfected and filled with untainted joy. This leaping joy is symbolised by these spirits, 'so wild and so fleet, with sandals of lightning on their feet, and wings soft and swift as thought, and eyes as love which 'is veiled not'. They come to announce that haman mind has now become the home of wisdom, science, creative arts, with love shining as a lodestar before it, 'which makes all it gazes on Paradise'.

They are followed by Earth and Moon, now united in love, betokening the marriage of earth and heaven with the wedding ring of joy. Last of all comes Demogorgon to announce to the whole universe the message and warning of the poet. He exhorts the creatures of the listening universe to remember that the snake of doom has been only scotched and not destroyed for good and all; that it may be loosened by time in its infinite course. But its onslaught may be foiled by the strong bulwark of those virtues which are Promethean :

> To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
> To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
> This, like thy glory Titan, is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
> This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

Q. 5. Shelley gives us 'a cosmic drama proceeding through all time in the natural world, in political societies and in the hearts of men'. Discuss.

Ans. Shelley started with the myth of *Prometheus Bound* as dramatized by Aeschylus and transformed it into a universal drama of regeneration. The martyrdom of the Titan is watched not only by his Mother Earth and the two sisters of his spouse, Asia, but by Sun, ocean and the numerous constellations of the stars, and even by the spirits of the kingdom of the dead. Earth informs the Titan that his curse was heard by her innumerable seas and stream, mountains and caves, and winds, and the wide air above, and the inarticulate people of the dead. They have treasured it and contemplate it in secret joy and hope but dare not speak the words. The cry of woe which uprose from his agonised heart pierced the whole universe and the echo of misery resounded from every part of it. The statement of the Earth is echoed by the spirits of the elements, and the third voice caps the climax :

> By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
> My still realm was never riven;
> When its wound was closed, there stood
> Darkness o'er the day like blood.

It means that the whole universe was terrorised and enslaved by the tyranny of Jupiter and became a fellow-victim with the tortured Titan. And naturally the regeneration which followed in the wake of the destruction of Jupiter's reign and the release of the Titan affected the whole universe. The ocean hears the account of Jupiter's fall from Apollo and rejoices that 'henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea will heave unstained with blood, and fair ships will sail on them 'without groans and desolation, and mingled voice of slavery and command. They will be accompained with the light of wave-reflected flowers, floating odours and music, soft and mild. Then the Earth describes the change in the universe of Nature. She has become healthy and happy, and, in consequence, all her children, plants, flowers, birds, beasts and men will partake of her joy and health. In mild variety reasons will pass; odorous winds will blow; the meteors will cleanse dull nights; the sun will give his life-giving warmth and the moon will rain down her mild radiance; every part of the land, even the crags and barren tracts will be clothed with ever-living leaves and fruits and flowers.

The spirit of the Hour relates that as the trumpet notes issued from his couch a sudden transformation was visible in the impalpable thin air and all-circling sun-light, and, most of all in the human world. Thones, altars, judgement seats, prisons, sceptres, tiaras, swords and chains and tomes of law and religion, with Kings and Priests, whose power and pride they imaged, disappeared from the face of the earth as 'the unsubstantial fabrics of dark dreams. And all the evil customs and petty tyrannies which grew up and flourished in the reign of Jupiter faded like miasmatic mists : so was the case

with the divisions and restrictions created by society and political ideologies.

The corruptions and distortions which, like ugly masks had covered the fair faces of men, detached themselves suddenly and floated in the air like uncouch visions. The thrones were kingless, and men walked one with the other as spirits do. None fawned, none trampled, and no face was inscribed with hate, disdain, fear, self-love or self-contempt. There was no face with deceptive smile which used to hide the falsehood of heart, no heart devoid of the sparks of love and sympathy, which made a man a walking vampire corrupting society with the contagin of his soul. None talked coldly or hypocritically, and none was bereft of hope.

Thus, men and women, purged of custom's evil taint became frank, beautiful and kind, speaking wisdom once they could not think, looking emotions once they dared not feel, and thus enveloped in the light of love, free from pride, jealousy and ill shame which once poisoned its sweet draught :

> The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself; just, gentle wire...

Or as the Earth pronounces in her musical jubilation :

> Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul
> Whose nature is its own divine control
> Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea

His will, well controlled, is guided by love and rules over all things. But man will still be man, and will not become a god. Pain and passion will still be there, but will become tame; even chance, mutability, and death will lose their stings.

In this state of liberated heart, mind and imagination when humanity has been united 'by a chain of linked thought, of love and might' man will be able to subdue the elements to its own authority, and create forms of unimagined loveliness act of cold marble, and colour, which will fill the minds of mothers with dreams and ideals to shape their children to their likeness. Language will gain immensely in its expressive and suggestive power, and will give vivid shapes to thoughts and forms, 'which else senseless and shapeless were.'

> The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
> Give up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
> They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on !
> The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
> And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare
> Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me; I have none.

Q. 6. 'Prometheus Unbound is a powerful expression of humanity's desire for liberty'. Elucidate.

Ans : Man is a strange and paradoxical creature, because made in the image of God, with a soul, supposed to be immortal, and a mind of large discourse, looking before and after, and aspiring to soar up in the air out of scorn for the earth where cases abound, his angelic spirit is encased in an animal body which has a gravitational pull, earth ward. Puzzled by this paradox of a noble soul imprisoned in a frame of flesh, Shakespeare cries, in one of his moving sonnets 'poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth !' and this sinful earth, the body, is the home of wild passions, anger, hate, jealousy, lust etc, which disfigure human nature and create conflict, cruelty, injustice and bloody strife and war in the world. It is also frail, and is subject to diseases of various kinds, to the law of change which converts strong and ruddy youth into a pale, aged, tottering spectre; the flower-like lovely female face into the wrinkled and haggard countenance of the ancient dame. Moreover, the doom of mortality is constantly hovering over the head of man be he young or old, king or cobbler.

Then there is the universe of nature, surrounding man, so beautiful, so various and so new, yet so terrible and so dangerous, with its havoc of flood, of storm and cyclone, of earthquake and volcanic eruptions; with wild forests, cloud-piercing mountains and measureless oceans which obstruct his free movements. Society itself has its laws and arbitrary customs, dividing man from man on the basis of race, colour, caste and creed, and fettering his freedom in all the spheres of life. Then there are institutions political, legal and religious, which tends to enslave him. The strong tyrannise over the weak ; the wealthy snatch the means of subsistence from the poor, and bind a multitude of men, woman and children to a state of servitude and slavery. Kings, priests and politicians, drunk with power, ambition, bigotry and chauvinism war upon and destroy innocent population and unleash the war dogs upon the smiling cities—plunder, rape, arson and famine.

But when Pandora's box was opened and all the evils rushed out of it to prey upon the poor race of man, Hope remained at the bottom of the box, and this Hope has the wonderful capacity for renewing itself perpetually and urging man to move forward towards a life of greater happiness and freedom. This inherent urge for freedom gave birth to civilization the progress of which is a measure of man's conquest of the obstacles which lay in his way. Man created religion, philosophy, ethic, morality, science and psychology to overcome his own weaknesses, to discover the mysteries of life and of the universe, to cure his diseases and to tame and subdue the elements to his service. He gradually became the crown and roof of the God's creation, and by virtue of his creative powers manifesting itself in architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry and music he proved himself to be a rival of God himself, and gave birth to a world much

more beautiful than the world of nature and better fitted for the fulfilment of his unrealized dreams, desires, hopes and aspirations.

Human history is replete with examples of man's selfishness, cruelty and criminal ambition, but it also furnishes noble examples of great men who have sacrificed themselves for justice, freedom and redemption of man from sin and suffering; examples also of popular revolutions for ending despotism, slavery and political subjection, today we are dreaming of a single world state, and the League of Nations and United Nations Organization represent our effort in this direction.

Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* presents the picture of a golden age in which all human efforts for freedom will reach their crown and consummation, and his natural craving for liberty will be fully gratified. Shelley has rightly suggested that the golden age will mean the regeneration not only of man, and of human society, but of the universe at large. Men and women purged of the taints of evil and vices and free from all restrictions and barriers, from the tyranny of kings and priests, will live together as one harmonious body of pure, noble and intelligent creatures, knit together by love, which will pervade earth and heaven. Even in this state chance, mutability and death will remain, but man will be able to render them harmless; and passions will still visit his hearts, not as masters but as pet animals.

NOTE — Add details and quotations from the previous answer.

Q. 7. Consider Prometheus Unbound as a historic product.

Ans. Most of us look at Shelley through the eyes of Mathew Arnorld who described him as 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain'. A support for this view is found in some of the utterances of the poet himself, and we quote below a fine sample of it :

I can give not what men call love,
But will you accept not the worship
The heart lifts above and heaven rejects not ?
Desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow
Devotion to something afar from the spheres of our sorrow.

Readers whose eyes are jaundiced by this image of the flighty Poet will look upon his lyrical drama of universal regeneration as one of the most splendid phantoms of the fertile imagination of a poet of unearthly and ethereal nature.

But the readers are acquainted with the history of the period which witnessed the birth and growth of the romantic poetry will have little hesitation in asserting that Shelley's golden utopia is based upon a solid concrete foundation of reality. The chorus of the spirits of consolation chants rapturously :

Wisdom; Justice, Love, and Peace
When they struggle, to increase,

Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends with thee.

Shelley's prophecy of the golden age was simply an imaginative anticipation of things to come on the basis of his profound knowledge and understanding of the spirit of the present around him. It was an age when the idea of liberty was in the air. Rousseau had propounded his theory of social contract which subordinated kings and rulers to the will of the people. He had also proclaimed that man was born free and freedom was his birth right. The idea was taken up by Godwin who wrote *Political Justice* and preached the perfectibility of man and the operation of Necessity, which meant that progress of the world towards freedom and justice was inevitable and resistless.

Progress, indeed, was a popular concept : Wordsworth was a believer in the steady march of gregarious intellect; Keats made it the basis of his interpretation of the succession of Olympian dynasties in his *Hyperion*, and the continual discoveries and inventions of science, implying man's growing control over nature and the elements, his increasing insight into the mysteries of the universe, lent a powerful support to it. Thomas Pain's book on the rights of man and Mrs Godwin's powerful advocacy of the rights of women, constituted a significant contribution towards the creation of that peculiar atmosphere.

These theories were solidly supported by certain events which shook the very fountain of imperialistic and political domination or despotism. First came the American war of independence against British hegemony which created a great, independent republic. This was followed by the outbreak of the French Revolution, with its ringing slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity which was greeted by poets and lovers of freedom, including young Wordsworth, as the dawn of he golden age. The dream, of course, faded when the great Revolution led to the reign of blood and terror, which eventually yielded place to the establishment of the military despotism of Napolean.

The rise of Naploean and his victorious march over the free nations of Europe gave rise to an intense hatred of tyranny and an equally intense passion for liberty, and the two combined together to occasion a concerted effort on the part of Great Britain and other powers to oppose the tyrant and rid the world of his growing terror.

While Europe was struggling to combat the dark spectre of Napolean the enslaved Greece, mother of European culture, philosophy and art, was rousing itself to shake off the yoke of the turkish rule. The Greek war of freedom aroused deep sympathy in Europe, and while Byron gave his life to it, Shelley presented to it his gift of song in the form of another lyrical play, *Hellas*, a briefer chant of the golden age.

Nothing can be a greater proof of the spirit of this age and its intense love of freedom than the exaltation of the old rebels, Satan,

Cain and Prometheus. In the hands of the romantic poets and critics they became the champions of liberty against divine tyranny. Blake described Milton as one of the Devil's party, Byron raised him as he raised Cain, above the omnipotent God of Christianity, and Prometheus received a greater meed of praise as Shelley placed him above Satan himself.

He says, in the Perface to the play, "Prometheus is in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest."

This emphasis upon the moral aspect of the rebel's character, upon the strength born of suffering in the bondage, also has a precedent in the writings of authors of the age from whom Shelley learnt many things. In his sonnets written during the period of fear and panic born of the ominous shadow of Napolean, falling as a blight upon smaller and weaker but independent countries, words the reiterates his message that nations will live and regain their freedom by their moral strength, and in some of them he turns to his own country and laments the wilful subordination of moral and spiritual interest to the material consideration in the compatriot's of Milton.

From the above discussion it is abundantly clear that Shelley's *Prametheus Unbound* is a historic product, a work which clearly mirrors the intellectual climate of the age when it was composed. It fully illustrates the truth of Arnold's dictum that a great work of art is the product of the union of two factors or forces—a gifted man and a congenial moment. Shelley with his inborn love of freedom, absolute and unqualified, wrote in an age when the atmosphere was deeply charged with a passion for liberty, and the finest fruit of this union was this lyrical drama in four Acts.

Q. 8. 'Prometheus Unbound dramatises the defeat of evil by the spirit of life.' Elucidate.

or

Write a note on Shelley's interpretation of the myth of Prometheus.

or

By what steps do we pass from Prometheus Bound to Prometheus Unbound ? Bring out the significance of the fourth Act of the Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. Shelley took the myth of Prometheus bound from Aeschylus and changed it into a fable of Prometheus Unbound, and this change clearly reflects the nature of the interpretation he put upon the old myth. We may say that Shelley's play is a modern Morality depicting the process of the defeat of evil by the forces of

life, a version of the story of Christ, symbol of the highest type of humanity, who submitted to the torture and humiliation involved in his crucifixion, forgave his oppressors and rose triumphant from his grave.

Prometheus Unbound is a spiritual drama which is not concerned with the story of a particular hero but with a process from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from death to life. The process is cosmic and the characters are symbols of the two elemental forces, Life and Death; Good and Evil, the former symbolized by Prometheus and the latter by Jupiter. The weapons used in this conflict are spiritual on the side of the good, and comparatively gross and material on the part of evil, the good being synonymous with life, and evil with death. Jupiter, the omnipotent ruler, embodies the evil which has tainted and terrified the whole universe, which looks for liberation to Prometheus, the principle of Good, which is bound by its own creature because Shelley believed that evil exists only by the sufferance of the good, and as soon as the good wills or resolves that Evil must go, it will disappear automatically. Prometheus is, thus, bound because of his own weakness, part of which lies in the feeling of hatred he harbours against Jupiter. If Asia, the principle of love, is banished from him, it is because hate and love cannot live together. In the absence of Love, even Faith and Hope, represented by Panthea and Ione, are powerless as allies of the good. The union of goodness, beauty, love, faith and hope will mean Life in its full strength, and this process of the union of life force is the main focus of the play.

The first Act shows the emphatic beginning of this process. The starting point is the banishment of hatred from the heart of the bound Titan. He has accepted suffering because it purifies the soul and brings wisdom, which gives a deeper insight into the mystery of universe. Prometheus has realized that the evil doer digs his own grave by mutiplying evil, that Jupiter is bound to fall at the destined hour and he is more properly an object of pity than of hate. His anxiety to hear the exact words of the curse which he uttered upon his oppressor is a kind of self-imposed test intended to discover whether or not he has become a proof against his old hate.

The test is successful and Prometheus is convinced that the curse was the product of his blind grief, and now he wishes no body to suffer. A second and major test is proposed by the Furies who seek to shake him by showing the visions of misery, defeat and afflictions of mankind flowing from the efforts, sacrifices and even momentary victories of those who like himself court misery and bondage for the redemption of the miserable mankind. Prometheus is shaken, but not subdued; he exclaims :

I would fain
Be what it is my dest'ny to be,
The saviour or strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things.

It is in this purified state of his heart, though ruling under the stress of the second test, that he remembers his banished love and realizes its supremacy over other things in the world.

The second Act shows the next step in the process, and the centre of gravity shifts from Prometheus to Asia, symbol of Love sent into banishment by the imperfect good. But when th eagerly-awaited Panthea stands before her and relates her dream of ne Titan's transformation to her, Asia understands that their unic is not far off,and she must prepare herself for it. But her own pr ›aration is notenough; she must descend into the darkness in the ' art of the universe to imbibe strength and wisdom from it, and .ouse it into activity. The sympathetic universe is calling upon the sisters to follow the airy voices and pursue their arduous journey beyond. the limits of the human world into the dark cave of Demogorgon, symbol of the creative force of life, to drink wisdom from it and set it in motion to destroy the universal evil. Asia and Panthea, linked arm in arm, follow the voices to the throne of the Palpable dark ness, without limb and shape, which is made vocal by Asia and tells her that Love is eternal, above the reach of time, chance and mutability. This makes Asia conscious of her inherent power and at once appears the dark car driven by the spirit of the fatal Hour, which takes Demogorgon to the court of Jupiter, while a bright car, with Asia and Panthea inside it, speeds through the air, to the place of the Titan's martyrdom.

The third Act opens in the court of the boastful tyrant, making merry in anticipation of his son's arrival, who will trample down the last sparks of rebellion and liberty in the heart of man. But the actual appearance of Demogorgon blasts his high hopes deflates him with his frown and sends him crying into the depth of the dark abyss. Thus ends the Evil, the force of death. This is followed by unfinding of Prometheus by Hercules, which means the submission of strength to the authority of goodness and justice. Here we take leave of him and his family and attend to the accounts of revolution that has taken place in the society of man.

The original play ended here, but after a brief space of time Shelley wrote down and added the fourth Act to it. This has led many critics to think that this Act is an after thought and does not add to the dramatic significance. Yet as a matter of fact, it comes as a climax of the spiritual process which begins in Act I, and is an integral part of the spiritual drama showing the conquest of Evil by the forces of life. The meaning of this conquest and the nature of the resultant golden age must be brought home to us; and this is done in this Act. The problem facing the poet was how to familiarise the reader with this beautiful aspect of his idealism; and Shelley follows two effective ways to solve it.

In the first place, as the regeneration is universal it must be presented through months of the personified forces representing the various spheres of it. Not only the universal sense of joy, but the

various grounds of that joy must be brought home to the readers.

Secondly, Shelley rightly thought that a concept so ideal and vague can only be conveyed by music, hence the songs of the spirits, the joyful chant of the Earth and ecstatic response of the love-lorn moon, which create in us a state of trance in which the golden dream assumes vividness and tangibility of some thing real and concrete. The trance is at last broken by the solemn warning of Demogorgon that Evil may be let loose again by time and mankind must keep its powder dry by cultivating Promethean virtues, the forces of life potent against the advance of evil.

Q. 9. With special reference to Prometheus Unbound consider the change that Shelley's ideas lack maturity and coherence.

Ans. Shelley, the poet, had the appearance of a handsome boy, with an aura of strangeness and ethereal light about him, and his complete unconcern about the practical demands of everyday life, and the routines, customs, formalities, fashions, manners and behaviours of men and women which absorb the whole attention of other writers, made him the denizen of some other planet, not an inmate of this planet. As a poet also his ethereal imagination dissolved the solidity of real objects or mixed up the real landscape with the landscape of dream. Like his own skylark he soared up from the earth and its concrete individualities and gross concerns into the intense inane and poured his keen strains down upon the unsympathetic ears, which found in them very little to bring them to the business and bosom of the earth-bound men.

But he was a voracious reader of works, philosophical and scientific, because his intense curiosity was ever ready to welcome any clue to the mysteries of the universe, and of life and death. His poetic career is not only a chart of his artistic progress, but a continued voyage of discovery in the wide field of philosophy from Godwin and materialistic to Plato and idealistic philosophers.

But it must be remembered that he was a poet, not a philosopher, and he freely borrowed ideas from different schools and systems in accordance with the demand of his poetry. In *Prometheus Unbound*, for example, he mixes together Godwin, Plato, the theory of Evolution and the apocalypse in one and the same work. But it does not mean that his thoughts are incoherent or entirely visionary, the mere flutterings of his luminous wings in the void above the earth. In point of fact his *Prometheus Unbound* is a historic product rooted in the intellectual climate of an age which had witnessed the American war of independence, the French revolution, the national struggle of Greek to throw off the Turkish yoke, the military despotism of Napolean; an age which produced works on the rights of men and women, on the perfectibility of man, on the concept of progress which was supported by the multiplication of scientific discoveries and inventions. To write about the golden age or the

regeneration of the world in such an age was by no means a quixotic venture.

Then considered as a work of art the lyrical drama of Shelley is a fairly coherent composition and Eliot's charge of immaturity and adolescence is not applicable to it. Eliot himself accepted the Christian philosophy of the golden age which was based upon the belief that man was once living in Eden like an immortal, but was driven out of it by his sin. To redeem the sinful man God sent down His own Son, Christ, as a poor mortal to live on the earth, to suffer humiliation, . to die on the cross, only to rise from his grave and take his place on the throne beside his father. In this context the whole duty of man was to purify his soul through suffering, penance and constriction in order to regain his blissful state. This is exactly the argument of Shelley. If mankind wants to get rid of evil and all the vices and corruptions generated by it, it must cultivate the virtues embodied in the Titan. Prometheus is a Christ figure chained to the rocks for being a saviour of poor and benighted race of man. But suffering brings him wisdom and Christ-like forgiveness, which sets in motion a process of regeneration which moves through well-marked stages represented by the several Acts of the play to its climax in the final Act, which is a celebration of the golden age.

Those who change him with failure to grasp the actual facts state only a half truth, because Shelley, though neglectful of the practical concerns of life and of the individual men and women, was keenly interested in the events of the day and of the general nature of mankind. The accounts of the changes following the overthrow of Jupiter, given by the spirit of Earth and the spirit of the Hour bear eloquent testimony to the fact that Shelley had an intelligent understanding of human nature, of the crooked ways in which men hide the dark intents of their hearts by sweet smiles on their faces and the polished words of their hollow conversations, and the various vices which disfigure and distort the image of God which they essentially are.

Those who approach the lyrical drama in the expectation of finding human characters and coherent plot, with dramatic conflict productive of the manifestation of the complexities of concrete figures are bound to be disappointed because Shelley did not write an orthodox play. *Prometheus Unbound* is a drama of ideas and it deals with the conflict between the forces of Good and Evil on the cosmic plane, where the weapons used are spiritual and characters are personified forces, but the various stages of progress from Prometheus Bound to Prometheus Unbound are clear and logical, while Act IV, being the climax of the whole process, dealing, as it does with the nature of the golden age, which is the main concern of the play; is a vital and integral part of it.

Q. 10. Attempt an appreciation of Shelley's lyricism, with special reference to Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. Shelley has called his Prometheus Unbound a lyrical drama and quite naturally the most prominent feature of the play is its lyricism, which is many-sided, covers many moods, employs as many as thirtysix stanza forms, and testifies to Shelley's extraordinary command over the musical resources of the English language. A critic has well said, 'The spontaneity, the splendid abandonment, the musical rush of the lines, these things make us his willing captives. He has made our hard, sibilant language a thing of fire and air. The beauty of the visible world strikes his prismatic imagination and is dissolved into rainbow colours; the very personality of the singer meets into the song until he ceases to be a man and becomes a voice, a lyric incarnate.

The ethereal magic of his lyrical style has been aptly described by Prof. B.I. Evans: "His lyrics were composed in a language whose effects had not been previously found in verse. The intangible and evanescent seem captured in verse through a vocabulary which has an indescribable lightness, absolutely untouched by the solid element of the earth". In this connection it will be well to bear in mind that in the *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley's spontaneous lyricism is curbed and kept within limits by the dramatic interest, and even the rapturous songs have a solid core of content, and precision and aptness of epithets.

We shall now hastily glance at the various lyrical passages and songs, and note the variety of measures, as well as ,the consummate skill with which, at all places, the music of words harmonises with the mood and the emotion which they are used to articulate. More than half the play is written in blank verse, which has echoes of Milton and Wordsworth, but Shelley has made it a very flexible instrument. Commenting upon this quality of a well-worn measure a critic has observed: 'The blank verse itself is no monotonous instrument, and the range of the poet's power can in no way be better illustrated than by the different kinds of music which he is able to draw from an instrument technically unchanged. This may be seen at once by comparing the opening soliloquy of Prometheus in Act I, with that of Asia in Act II. The music of the two passages is entirely different. In the speech of Prometheus, consonants strike hard on the consonants, and the vowel colouring is scant and cold. The lines have a sonorous pomp, derived in part from their austere majesty of epithets, in part from their sternly repressed passion. But into the words of Asia has passed something of the soft air and light of the spring-tide which she sings. The melody has a prolonged and gentle sweetness which might be languid, were it not for the sparkle of delicate life that animates the whole..

The lines addressed by the Titan to the vision of Christ nailed to the cross have a haunting rhythm of profound pathos, which sounds like a half-suppressed sob of the heart:

Thy name I will not speak,
It hath became a curse, I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee.

We may contrast this rhythm with that of the passage in which the Earth expresses her maternal joy at the release of her brave son:

I hear, I feel
Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves; 'Tis life, 'Tis joy,
And through my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth runs down circling.

Then mark the passionate ecstasy which expresses itself in lines of panting rhythm, as it were, in the song that bursts from the air as Panthea is delightedly watching the radiant transformation of her sister :

Lamp of Earth ! where'ver thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness.
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

Then mark the contrast in the music of the reflective Asia in the song that closes Act II :

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it.

But the swallow-flights of song, the rush and hurry of music and the fluidity of words, epithets and images and the liberal pouring of simile on simile are to be found in the lyrical utterances and strain, of aerial voices and spirits that pervade the play :

The following quotation is a fair sample of it :

Like veiled ligntning of asleep.
Like spark nursed in ambers,
The last look love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.

Again, compare the deep sea-swell which sounds through songs of the Earth, with the flute-like melodies of the moon's responses :

Ha ! Ha ! the caverns of my hollow mountains.
My cloven fire-crags, sound exulting fountains,

Laugh with a vast and indistinguishable laughter.
and
Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine !

And this wonderful orchestration of myriad melodies closes with the organ voice of Demogorgon :

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Q. 11. Prepare a critical note on Shelley's imagery in Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. In the Preface to his lyrical drama Shelley writes: "The imagery which I have employed will be found in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed". The images are brief and suggestive, less frequently elaborate and decorative, but in all cases, and collectively they underline the main preoccupations of Shelley's mind. We quote below a number of poetic fragments as samples of his imagery, and afterwards we shall critically comment on them :

The crawling glaciers pierce me with their spears;
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist

unrolled on the morning wind; drinking life from her loved eyes; what an awful whisper rises up; it tingles through the frame as lightning, hovering ere it strikes; I feel faint like one mingled in entwining love; where thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy; it tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud; till thy Infinity be a robe of envenomed agony; that climb the wind like vapours, like vapours steaming up behind; the reluctant mind flags wearily in its unending flight till it sink, dizzy blind, lost; we track all things, as lean dogs pursue some struck and sobbing fawn; thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes; a troop of spirits gather like a flock of cloud in spring's delightful weather, thronging in the blue air; like the omnipotence of music, which through the deep and labyrinthine soul, like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll; Asia ! who, when my being overflowed, wert like a golden chalice of bright wine, How like death worms the wingless moments crawl; those eyes that burn through smiles which fade in tears, like stars half-quenched in mists of silver dew; his voice fell like music that makes giddy the dim brain; love from his soft and flowing limbs streamed forth like vaporous fire; arrayed in the soft light of its own smiles, which spread like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon; Low, sweet, faint sounds,

like the farewell of ghosts, the sun-awakened avalanche ! like piled thoughts in heaven-defying minds till some truth is loosened, and the nations echo round; thought which pierces the dim universe like light; their bright locks stream like a comet's flashing hair; a terrible shadow floats like the lurid smoke of earthquake-ruined cities; its soft smiles attract the soul as light lures winged insects; mind obscure with sorrow as eclipse darkness the sphere; radiant as the mind arising bright from the embrace of beauty; Death is the veil which those who live call life. Splinter and knead down my children to one void mass, battering and blending; as in the soft and sweet eclipse ! where soul meets soul on lovers' lips; gleam like pale meteors; Love folds over the world its healing wings.

The 'examples of images given are intended to support the generalization about Shelley's preoccupations and his favourite thoughts and ideas. In nature he sought images from vapour, cloud, river, ocean, dew, mist, snow, which change the face of things, and from storm, tempest, whirlwind, earthquake, fountain, avalanche, thunder and lightning indicative of the tremendous force and energy which he desired to possess for driving away the dead and rotten things. The tremendous force tearing its way through obstacles brings the images of things breaking or being battered, or trampled and trodden down; images of sharpness expressed by such dominant words as pierce, penetrate, cleave, rive. At the same time the process of slow and steady operation is expressed by the images of creeping and crawling, or insensibly working their way into the heart of things like fire slowly burning its way into a log of wood or worms eating into corpses. Shelley being an idealist was obsessed with appearances which hide realities, hence the images of veil or painted curtain, or mask. He was a lover of swift movement, which made 'wing' and 'winged' his favourite words. With wings one may soar up in the air, but wings may flag and droop and one may faint and be dizzy. Images of light and fire abound, but opposite image of darkness, smoke and eclipse are also there. He himself was pursued by detractors and the image of hunt or a poor wounded animal pursued by hunter or hound is quite common in the play. He was a seeker of unity behind diversity, acutely aware of the complexities of things—hence 'web', 'maze', labyrinth' bring their own images and 'daedal is one of his favourite epithets. His is a flowing universe, where things are liquid and his favourite images centre round melting and dissolving and the intermingling of separate things. Similarly, one person deriving inspiration from another is imaged as 'drinking in his effluence, or receiving his overflowing wine into his or her chalice-like heart, or vibrating to it like Aeolian lyre. Music and effect of music is easily felt but Shelley seems to have been acutely aware of the echoes of the melody which lingered and vibrated in the heart long after it had died upon the physical ear.

Imagery of sensation is quite prominent, and clearly suggests the quick and acute sensuous perception reaching the heart with overpowering effect. Whether it is 'odour' or the music, instrumental

or vocal, or the words of a beloved it passes through the senses to the soul which faints, swoons or feels drugged by it. The sense of touch is equally acute 'the crawling glaciers pierce with their spears; heat clings like burning gold round the dissolving brain', and the curse of the Titan shall clasp the tyrant till his Infinity shall be 'a robe of envenomed agony'.

Apart from a few images derived from classical mythology, especially the worship of Maenands the most remarkable among the occasional image are those of 'ritual' and 'sacrifice', we shall close with a citation expressive at once of Shelley's interest in 'ritual' and the tendency of his imagery to become a flowing robe for his thought:

The Furies are speaking to the bound Titan :

> As from the rose which the pale priestress kneels
> To gather for her festal crown of flowers
> The aerial crimson, falls flushing her cheek,
> So from our victim's destined agony
> The shade which is our form invests us round,
> Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

But it must be said in justice to the poet's craftsmanship here that most of the images are like close-fitting garments of thoughts—brief, apt and illuminating.

Q. 12. Write a critical note on the style of Shelley in Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. A careful examination of the style in Shelley's lyrical drama will convince the reader that here at least he managed to overcome his characteristic weakness arising from the exuberance of his fancy, and his pre-occupation with things and ideas obscure, visionary and ethereal, and cultivate a style austere, apt, lucid and forceful in the dramatic part, and restrained and vivid even in the lyrics which appear in various forms and measures.

The language is pure and mostly transparent; free alike from archaism and latinism, from far-fetched images and curiously-contrived phrases and expressions. The austerity of style shows itself in the aptness of adjectives, in the abundance of compound epithets and in the brevity, force and lucidity of images and similitudes. The three aspects can be easily illustrated.

In the first place, one may notice the force and precision of adjectives in the following passage :

> *Blue* thistles bloomed in the cities; *foodless* toads
> Within *voluptuous* chambers *panting* crawled.

Secondly, the abundance of compound epithets, which is justified by the contribution it makes to the terseness of style and the solemnity of the rhythm. We give below a few specimens casually picked up :

Eagle-baffling mountains; moon-freezing crystals; leaden-coloured east; earthquake-rifted mountains; all-prolific evil; plumes like rose-ensanguined ivory; thought-executing ministers; all-miscrative brain of Jove; woe-illumined mind; storm-extinguished day.

As regards the force and aptness of images conducive to the lucidness and illumination of thoughts, the following examples will suffice :

What an awful whisper rises up : *it tingles through the frame, as lightning tingles hovering as it strikes*; the revenge of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades as rainy wind through the abandoned gate of a fallen palace; thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes; Asia ! who when my being overflowed wert like a golden chalice to bright wine; 'tis He, arrayed in the soft light of his own smiles, like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.

It is a 'lyrical drama', a blend of the lyrical and dramatic, and in both the parts what is most remarkable is the variety of style, of rhythm and speech. There are passages of limpid purity and undimmed transparency. Take, for example, the following speech of Asia :

> Common as light is love,
> And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
> Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
> It makes the reptile equal to the God :
> They who inspire it most are fortunate,
> As I am now; but those who feel it most
> Are happier still.

But, at the opposite extreme, we have passages, very few indeed, marked by intricacy of speech and metaphor, which compel us to pause and ponder :

> Love, from its awful throne of patient power
> In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
> Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
> And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
> And folds over the world its healing wings.

The predominance of lyrical element brings into prominence the orchestral music of the play which bears an eloquent testimony to Shelley consummate skill in playing, with equal success on a variety of instrument, and modulating his verse to the changing mood and voices with effortless ease, whether the measure be old and familiar, or new and invented in wonderful variety of short and long combinations of verses, where music and mood or meaning have become inseparable, and words and images so fluid, indeed, that they insensibly meet into one another.

The blank verse has become Protean, taking colour from the speaker, and easily adapting itself to the subtle changes and variations in the mood of the same person. The rhythmic variation pervades

the entire play. It varies from the slow rhythm in the leisurly talk between Apollo and Ocean in Act III, Scene II. and the panting, leaping, rushing and dancing melodies of the spirit songs in the various Acts. The most striking example of sustained harmony of music and mood is the moving song of Asia, which closes Act III :

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing:
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it.

The second elaborote and sustained part is composed by the antiphonal songs of the Earth and the moon, the vigorous male voice contrasted with the soft, tender and lanquishing music of the love-intoxicated maiden :

THE EARTH : The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness !
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined !
Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight
Which wraps me like the atmosphere of light.
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON : The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing and shine :
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine
On mine ! on mine.

But the characteristic music of Shelley is heard as the elfin notes of ethereal spirits and voice, whether they sing to console the Titan or to lure Asia on her pilgrimage to the cave of Demogorgon, or ecstatically describe the transformation of Asia, or gather, like radiant birds of paradise to sing, and dance and leap with joy to celebrate the advent of the Millennium. The following is a fair sample of Shelleyan lyricism :

And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
And music of the living grass and air
The emerald light of leaf-entangld beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aerial mass
Which drowns the sense.

But the pictorial element of the style is as remarkable as the musical. Indeed, the whole play is a picture gallery, full of vivid and graphic natural descriptions, of personified forces of nature and spirits and phantoms. The ethereal touch of Shelley is apparent on most of these pictures, but there is no vagueness or haziness on any one of them. Vivid natural descriptions

abound in the play, which begins with the description of the peculiar setting and torture of the Titan, and passes to the vivid landscape-painting in the account of Asia's journey to the cave of Demogorgon. and reaches its climax towards the close where Prometheus, the Earth and Spirits of the Hour and of the Earth vie with one another, as it were in demonstrating their power of description. Equally vivid are the briefer pictures which record the subtle chañges of light and colour in the morning sky :

The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains......
......now it wanes, it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel the pale air.

Then consider the pictures of coming and going Mercury, of the Furies, of Demogorgon, of the two Fauns, of the Nymphs of the Ocean, of the spheres of the Earth and the Moon, and their Spirits. Of still painting the most beautiful is the following :

I cannot tell my joy, when ov'r a lake
Upon a drooping bough with night shade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries.

Then there are vivid pictorial images and similes, among which the most remarkable are the two similes employed by Apollo to describe the frown of Demogorgon and the fall of Jupiter in the likeness of an eagle, entangled in the whirlwind, his eyes blinded by white lightning, his struggling form beaten down by hail till it sinks prone and the aerial ice clings over it.

There are also snapshots in single lines :

O, sister, look ! white fire has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-laden cedar; how fearfully God's thunder howls behind.

This is the picture of the dead snakes in the entrails of the Earth :

And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength or their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags.

Q. 13. Write a note on Shelley's conception of Love, with special reference to his Prometheus Unbound.

ns. Shelley is one of the supreme poets of love because to him Love is a transcendental force kindling all things into beauty. No poet felt more deeply the dynamic influence of love in moulding human destiny and none realised more utterly the insignificance of life devoid of love. Yet his conception of love is intellectual or

spiritual inspired by Plato's idea of Uranian Aphrodite born solely of Uranus in which the female had no part. As a love poet, therefore he differs from Byron and Keats. The physical aspect of love, its wild intoxication, its giddy rapture, its varying and quick-shifting moods, so gloriously reflected in the poems of Byron, Keats and Browning, has no place in his poetry. 'The sentiment is so rarefied, so readily does it pass from the personal to the Universal so engrossed is he with love as an abstract ideal that as a love-poet, in the commonly accepted sense of the term, he is curiously unsubstantial and ineffective." But the philosophical aspect of love is the staple of his best poetry, which must be considered at length.

With Plato he believed that love between two souls begins in their pre-natal existence, and each is only a half-circle, anxious after its birth in this world, to seek and find the other half of it, a sister soul, to complete itself. His whole life may be described as a prolonged quest for an ideal woman who is at once a sister and a sexual mate, a woman and also an incarnation of Ideal Love, like Asia in *Prometheus Unbound.* It is in this work that Shelley's philosophy of Love finds its most concrete and emphatic expression. The enslavement of humanity under the tyranny of Jupiter is reflected in the separation and banishment of Asia, embodiment of love, from Prometheus. The suffering of the bound Titan makes him spiritually purer and wiser, and he realizes that without love there is nothing in life. This change in the Titan inspires the heart of Asia who, in response to the calls of airy voices, pursues her journey to the Cave of Demogorgon, to drink wisdom from that primeval source and set it in motion to destroy evil and usher in the Millennium.

Apart from this dramatization of the role of Love in the process of the regeneration of humanity and its sustainment, there are many speeches and observations which throw light on the nature and function of Love in individual as well as social life. The divinity of love is described as follows :

> That planet-crested shape on lightning-braided pinions
> Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses :
> His footsteps paved the world with light.

Love as a source of light and life is best described by Panthea as she witnesses the transformation of her sister, Asia, who, like Venus, was born at sea :

> Love like the atmosphere
> Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
> Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
> And the deep ocean and the sunless caves,
> And all that dwells within them.

Even in her exile Asia has demonstrated the creative and transforming power of love :

> Indian vale, the scene of her sad exile
> Rugged once and desolate and frozen

But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and water, from the ether
Of her transforming presence.

Asia herself gives the best description of the value of love in the life of men and women :

Common as light is love
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to God :
They who inspire it most are fortunate
......but those who feel it most
Are happier still.

As the impulse of union between two souls it is described as an effluence passing from the lover into the heart of the beloved object, Prometheus pictures it as the flowing wine of his youth which Asia received as a chalice of gold, while Panthea relates to Asia how the light shooting from the bright image of transformed Titan 'flowed and mingled with her blood 'till it became his life and his grew mine'. This absorption of lovers into one united entity is stressed by the love-lorn maiden, the Moon, also.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
when soul meets soul on lover's lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still by thee
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful, full.

She goes on relating her passionate love for the Earth, which makes her gaze upon his loving bride :

Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty and might.

Shelley, in his elaborate picture of the golden Age, has laid considerable emphasis on love as the cementing force which will weld diverse groups of men scattered all over the world into one harmonious whole :

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linked thought
Of love and might to be divided not,
His will is as tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

In the speech of Demogorgon which closes the play the sustaining power of love in the transformed world is clearly emphasized:

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour

Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Q. 14. Examine Shelley's use of Allegory and Symbol.

and

Q. 15. Prometheus Unbound can be diversely interpreted according as the reader is a Christian, a Marxian or a Freudian.

Ans. Shelley took over the story of Prometheus from Aeschylus, the father of Greek tragedy and transformed it into a complex allegory of regeneration of mankind, leading to the advent of Millennium or the golden age. By 'complex allegory' we mean a story of dark conceit which easily lends itself to diverse interpretations, because the characters are symbols. In this sense it differs from an orthodox allegory like Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress*, where the story follows one definite plan, and each character stands for one definite and precise idea or quality.

In *Prometheus Unbound* the main characters and events are fraught with complex symbolic significance and each reader of the work may fasten upon the particular facet according to his nature, outlook and prepossession. Thus, Prometheus, the bound saviour of mankind, is described by Shelley himself as "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the present and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends." But the Titan is actually larger and more complex than the intent of its creator. He has been taken as a symbol of human mind; human imagination and human psyche, which authority and restrictive laws fetter and restrain, but cannot quell or repress. Similarly, Jupiter is a symbol of Tyranny of all kinds—intellectual, political, social and psychological which vitiate and disfigure human life and human nature and convert the earth into the vast grave for her miserable children. Another complex figure is Demogorgon, well-known to poets for a long time which Shelley has new-stamped with his peculiar imagintion.

He is a dark hidden power, eternal, resistless like the old Fate; and he also symbolizes that immanent spirit in the Universe, which, like a creative Life Force is constantly striving to evolve better and lovelier forms in nature, and which is naturally sympathetic to all human endeavours directed towards the liberation and amelioration of the human race, as is clear from the description of his Cave:

Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift
....
The voice which is contagion to the world.

In terms of Jungian psychology, Demogorgon is the symbol of the unconscious layer of human psyche, which is described as the dark creative mother of human consciousness, which must be set in motion to release the human consciousness for vigorous creative and fruitful activity.

Asia, consort of the Titan, is a simple figure She is a symbol of Love, an incarnation of Intellectual Beauty, also of fertility, like classical Venus, and of redemption like Christian 'agape' who must unite and earnestly work for the happiness and freedom of the fettered humanity. Panthea and Ione, her sisters, are the symbols of Faith and Hope respectively.

It is, therefore, not improper to say that the poem will have different meanings to several classes of readers. A Christian reader, for example, will take the play as a vision of Morality drama, dealing with the conflict between good and evil forces for the possession of the human soul. To him the bound Titan will be a Christ-like figure, undergoing torture for the sake of the weak, benighted humanity, with hope for the final triumph of the good and pity for the tyrant himself who is blind to the self-destructive effect of the evil he practises and multiplies. He will also find delight in the vivid and elaborate description of the purified and perfected humanity, governed and united by love and controlled by its own divine nature, because the picture is in full accord with the Christian conception of 'the Second Coming' which will usher into being the happy golden age of our dream.

But the Christian reader will certainly be shocked by the atheistical poet's picture of the crucified Christ, as it appears to the agonised imagination of the tortured Titan till he exclaims :

> Thy name I will not speak,
> It hath become a curse. I see, I see,
> The wise, the mild, the lofty and the just,
> Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee.

A Marxian reader, on the other hand, will be delighted by this frank and incontrovertible picture of the terrible things which have been done in the name of a religion founded by the Prince of peace, mercy and mildness :

> His words outlived him, like swift poison
> Withering up truth, peace and pity.
> Look ! where round the wide horizon
> Many a million-peopled city
> Vomits smoke in a bright air,
> Mark the outcry of despair !
> 'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
> Wailing for the faith he kindled.

To him the bound Prometheus will be a type of champion of the poor, down-trodden 'have-nots', undergoing ever-multiplying

tortures at the hand of a despotic tyrant, whose power and glory are hollow within. He may not accept the passive non-violent disposition and Christian-like forgiveness of and pity for the tyrant which the suffering Titan clearly displays, but he will heartily subscribe to the picture of the classless human society, a handsome anticipation of Marx's own dream of communism in its final stage:

> all thrones were kingless
> The loathsome, masks has fallen, the man remains
> Sceptreless, free, unsubscribed, and nationless
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king.

For a psychologist of the Freudian school the bound Titan will be taken as a symbol of the human psyche, fettered and restrained by authority, moral, religious, social and political, embodied in Jupiter. And Demogorgon, the dark, shapeless power at the heart of tho universe; which is set in motion by Asia, symbol of Eros or life-principle, will represent the sub-conscious, the dark, hidden. terrible energy, which in a moment can set aside all the elaborate fabric of law and authority. He will find in the picture of liberated humanity many points to support the Freudian concept of the healthy human relationship :

> And women, too, frank, beautiful and kind
> From custom's evil taint, exempt and pure;
> Speaking the wisdom once they could not think;
> Looking emotions once they dared not be
> Nor jealousy nor envy, nor bitter shame
> Spoilt the sweet task of the nepenthe, love.

Q. 16. 'Nominally Greek in theme, but in treatment entirely foreign to the Greek Spirit'. Would this be the correct assessment of of Prometheus Unbound ?

Ans. Shelley himself has observed about his lyrical drama, which was inspired by the Greek play, *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus, to the effect that 'my *Prometheus* is of a higher character than anything I have yet attempted, and is perhaps less of an imitation of anything that has gone before it. It has no resemblance to Greek drama; it is original and cast me severe labour". Shelley transforms the very spirit of the Greek fable by changing the catastrophe, which presented the final reconciliation of the proud Titan with his omnipotent oppressor. 'The moral interest of the fable', he says in the Preface, 'which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary'. This romantic topsy-turvydom, involving the exaltation of the rebel Titan and the denigration of the great ruler of heaven is diametrically opposed to the reverential Greek attitude to the Lord of all the gods and must have shocked the sensibility of the Athenian audience. In the original play the sympathetic chorus, dilates upon the cruel and unjust

tortures heaped by Jupiter upon the benevolent champion of mankind. Yet it never loses sight of the fact that the decree of omnipotent has to be obeyed, however strange, mysterious and unreasonable it may appear on the face of it. But the most glaring contradiction of the Greek spirit is to be found in the treatment, and style of the English play. The essence of Greek spirit is embodied in the term 'classicism', while Shelley's manner is the last word in 'romanticism'. True to the classical spirit the Greek play deals with characters, solid, concrete and human, even though they are superhuman in stature and prowers. Here conflict is real, and tension and suspense, so necessary in a dramatic composition, are well sustained through the determined opposition of two mighty and unyielding wills. But in the lyrical drama of Shelley all the original solidity is dissolved, and the main figures become more symbolical than human, and they are surrounded by phantoms, forms and spirits of the air, which speak and behave like human beings, but are in fact, the unsubstantial pigments of imagination. Jupiter himself becomes the symbol of Evil, which in Shelley's conception was negative, impermanent and rootless.

The result is that the element of conflict is reduced to nil. After a long preparation Demogorgon drives to the court of Jupiter, and we are invited to witness an exciting combat. But the actual presentation of the conflict is bathetic. The mere frown of the dark Deity is enough to meet away all the veneer of strength and glory we have associated with the omnipotent Despot of the universe and reveals the utter hollowness and frailty which underlies his imposing exterior. Indeed, the description of the vanquished Jupiter in the image of the sun-defying eagle struggling with wind and hail-storm till it is pelted down into the abyss of death, given by Apollo to the ocean god is much more impressive than its dramatic presentation in the preceding scene.

Then, in style and treatment the classical Greek spirit shows itself in an all-embracing concentration. One aspect of this concentration is represented by the three dramatic unities—of place, time and action, which Shelley flagrantly violated in the conception of his sprawling action, which begins in the valley of Indian Caucasus, then passes to the vale of Asia, who makes a journey through an undefined landscape to the dark cave of Demogorgon to rouse up that dormant deity into activity. And this activity carries the action into the heavenly court of Jupiter, and as soon as he is dethroned and driven into the dark abyss the action expands to cover the entire universe.

Concentration in style meant the reduction of all redundancy, and due subordination of the parts to the whloe andel imination of all that is merely ornamental, elaborate and decorative. It is true that there is a strong lyrical element in the Greek play, but lyricism remains integrated with the dramatic purpose. In Shelley, however, we find all the excesses associated with the romantic manner — an exuberance of words and images, elaboration of the descriptive and pictorial passages, and an ever-increasing inundation of music

and lyricism, which eventually liberates itself from the fetters of the play, and becomes a part of the universal jubilation attending the revolution wrought by the annihilation of tyranny.

Q. 17. What, in your opinion, are some of the obstacles which Shelley's Prometheus Unbound presents to a modern reader's enjoyment of it?

Ans. The modern temper is essentially anti-romantic and Shelley's poetry, of which the *Prometheus Unbound* is the most typical specimen, is ultra-romantic. This explains Shelley's unpopularity in this age, and the obstacle which a modern reader has to face in his study and enjoyment of his lyrical drama. A modern reader is much more interested in the real human problems staring him in the face and is apt to be sceptical about the elaborate description of the golden age, which in spite of its captiviting beauty remains a far off dream, too good to be true.

Moreover, the modern reader is hard-headed and scientific in his outlook, and is soon tired of Shelley's mythical picture of the universe peopled with spirits and genii and personified abstractions, as well as by descriptions of natural objects, which are a curious compound of science, poetry and dream. In this respect, the elaborate descriptions of the Earth and the Moon, with those of their guiding spirits may be cited as the aptest examples.

Again, the modern reader is in full agreement with Pope's well-known dictum that the proper study of mankind is Man—but man, not in the abstract rather Man as a collection of concrete individuals. The discoveries of modern psychologists have whetted our curiosity about the complexity of human nature; and the contradictions which underlie the surface unity of individual personalities. In a drama especially the modern reader expects human characters, acting, clashing and conflicting with one another and thereby revealing the several facets of their personalities, and creating an atmosphere of tension which slowly mounts during the progress of the action and reaches the climax in the end. But Shelley's play has neither a real human figure, nor any real conflict. Its figures are strutting puppets and half-human figures, which make human gestures, but are ultimately discovered to be puppets and phantoms, symbolizing ideas and qualities. The result is that there is much talk of conflict and combat, but no real enactment of them.

The present age has laid great stress upon the artistic and technical side of a literary composition—poem, novel, short story. It expects at least a coherent structure in which the various parts are logically, psychologically or thematically connected together, and each part occupies space in proportion to its importance in the scheme of the plot. In Shelley's lyrical drama coherence is by no means completely absent, but it is practically lost in the elaborate, decorative details and unnecessary repetitions and duplications, such as those so prominent in Act IV.

Similary the modern reader is interested in a poetry which expresses the complex sensibility of our age in an appropriate manner —that is a style marked by terseness and complexity, precision and density of expression, and complete elimination of all superfluities. It is, therefore, hard for such a reader to appreciate the exuberant style of Shelley, replete with elaborate images, similitudes and pictures of natural objects and scenes.

Lastly, it follows logically from the above consideration that the modern reader is best fitted to enjoy a poetry which serves as a tonic for his mind, which keeps him wide awake, critical and alert, tussling with the complexity and ambiguity of language and of symbols, and with the problem of supplying the missing links between ideas and paragraphs. But Shelley's poetry is lyrical and musical, and we feel only its saponific effect as the wave of melody begins to fall on our mind and a drowsy numbness creeps over its critical faculty till, in an opium dream as it were, it contemplates the gathering phantoms dancing before it, or gloats over the ethereal music coming from a world 'afar from the spheres of our sorrows', naturally enough as he awakes from this trance-like state he feels a bitter revulsion—sick with too much sweet.

Q. 18. Examine the validity of the criticism that Shelley's verse is marred by indistinct imagery and an excess of the sensuous and the sentimental.

Ans. Any generalisation about a poet is bound to be an exaggeration of certain features which may be present only in some poems but not in all, or it may be more striking in some pieces, and less remarkable in others. This is the case with the present criticism of Shelley's poetry. It is true that Shelley's verse is apt to degenerate into the weakness underlined in the statement, and they are clearly traceable in his *Prometheus Unbound*, yet in this last work such lapses are only occasional.

Excess of imagery is the most obvious feature of Shelley's verse, and poems like 'To a Skylark', 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' and 'Epipsy Chidion' may be cited as the most emphatic illustrations of this fact. Images are often indistinct because they are drawn from sources which were familiar to Shelley, but are vague to the readers, such as the dreamland, or the kingdom of ghosts and spirits. His thoughts and conceptions are often vague, and cannot be illustrated by concrete imagery. There is also a tendency in him to illustrate an idea by means of a heap of images which are calculated to smother it, or to render vague what is concrete and definite. In the ode addressed to a skylark, for example, he employs a string of similitudes to describe the singing bird hidden 'in the golden lightning of the sunken sun' till it ceases to be a concrete object, and becomes what the poet intended it to be—'Hail to thee blithe spirit, bird thou never wert'. Consider also the following extracts from his *Prometheus*

Unbound :

Low, sweet, faint sounds, *like the farewell of ghosts.*
As the fawn drawn the hound,
As thc lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; to-day, tomorrow;
As still obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down !

Excess of sensuousness as a blemish of Shelley's verse, needs to be properly defined, for Shelley was not sensuous in the sense in which the term has been used with reference, for example, to John Keats. His love poetry is more spiritual than sensuous, because every women who touched his imagination, was transfigured by him into a radiant spirit or incarnation of the divinity of Love. But he was sensuous in the general sense, in as much as his verse 'abounds in appeals to the senses, to the two primary senses, glanced at by Wordsworth in his famous phrase—'the mighty world of eye and ear'. *Prometheus Unbound* is an outstanding example of the excess of musical and pictorial elements which tend to cloy the senses. The lyrical element pervades the poem, which is a veritable orchestra of diverse instruments producing melodies profuse and incessant till the reader exclaims with Panthea :

I rise, as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

Similar is the case with the pictorial element in the poem which gluts the eyes with its excess. Apart from thc vivid and elaborate natural descriptions. there are graphic pictures of the spheres of Earth and Moon, of their respective Spirits, of the rural paradise where the liberated Titan is to dwell in bliss, the similes are mostly long, elaborate and pictorial and tend to become more decorative and illustrative.

Lastly, Shelley is apt to become sentimental, and weep like a child out of sheer helplessness in the face of the brute and inhuman world. He was a strange compound of the prophet and the tender virgin, and his stirring trumpet notes are, not unoften, mingled with the pathetic wails of a forsaken and solitary maiden. *Prometheus Unbound* has only a faint touch of this, in the passage where the Titan addresses the vision of Christ on the Cross :

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears !

The excess of pathos so cleverly conveyed by the poignant rhythm of the lines becomes significant as an example of self-pity because Shelley has identified himself with both—the benevolent

Titan chained to icy rocks, and the Saviour of mankind nailed to the bloody Cross.

Q. 19. *Examine the view that Prometheus's worst tortures as well as their cure can be traced to their will.*

Ans. In Milton's Christian epic the fallen angel faced with the dismal spectacle of Hell, exclaims undaunted that he brings with him a mind equal to the worst horrors of the place — for the 'mind is its own place and can make the hell of heaven and the heaven of hell'. Shelley also believed that the tyrant and his tortures are effective only as long as their victims suffer them to be; but as soon as they *will* that evil and oppression must not be, their horrors melt away like mountains of ice in summer. But this requires a will, purged of all taint and pettiness, and disciplined by wisdom. The proud Titan blinded by his grief first opposes his own hate to the wrath of his omnipotent tyrant, and heaps his heart-felt curses upon him, but suffering makes him wiser enough to perceive that his tyrant is more an object of pity than of hate and vengeance, because his evil deeds will prove his own undoing, and the destined hour would certainly drag him into the dust :

> As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim:
> Disdain ! Ah no ! I pity thee, what ruin
> Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven !
> But I speak in grief, not in exultation
> for I hate no more.

By virtue of this purified and disciplined will Prometheus is fully armed against all tortures physical as well as mental. It is proof also against all persuasions and allurements offered by Mercury, who cannot but pity him for what appears to be his blind obduracy : the Titan tells him :

> Pity the self-despised slaves of heaven,
> Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
> As light in the sun, throned.

As the physical tortures fail to subdue the will of the Titan Jupiter sends down the Furies as instruments of spiritual affliction and horror to undermine the Will itself of the invincible victim : The Third Fury makes the point clear :

> Though we can obscure not
> The soul which burns within, we will dwell
> Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
> ......We will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
> And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
> And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
> Crawling like agony.

They begin their operation and present before his agonised mind the vision of the two mighty tragedies in human history, the

failure of the French Revolution, and the betrayal of crucified Christ by the followers of the creed he preached and practised. They tell him exultingly :

> Behold an emblem : Those who do endure
> Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains; but heap
> Thousand fold torment on themselves, and on him.

The Titan is visibly moved and his reaction impresses Ione who exclaims :

> Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan
> Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
> Of the good Titan, as storm tears the deep,
> Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

One of the Furies goes on recounting the cruelties of man to man, and the callous indifference of the rich to the suffering and hardship of the poor, to which the Titan rejoins :

> Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes
> And yet I pity those they torture not.

His reply has force enough to drive away the Furies from the side of the Titan who has emerged victorious out of this spiritual conflict, but is terribly shaken, and yearns for the peace of the grave, which, being an immortal he cannot hope to possess. Yet he collects the scattered strands of his shaken will, and he tells the tyrant with firm confidence :

> The sights with which thou torturest, gird my soul
> With new endurance, till the hour arrives
> When they shall be no types of things which are.

This soul-shaking conflict has its own lesson for him. He now realizes that without his union with love he will not be able to overcome the universal tyranny :

> I feel
> Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
> Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
> Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
> Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.

In this way we are concerned here with a spiritual drama, where purified will, aided by active Love, brings about the destined hour when the omnipotent evil is to suffer a decisive defeat at the hands of the creative force inherent in the world itself.

Q. 20. 'Shelley is habitually his own hero'. Discuss with reference to the Prometheus Unbound.

Ans. Shelley's poetry has rightly been described as the utterance of a solitary soul, a poet at odds with society, which derided and hunted him and eventually hounded him out of England. He was

not much interested in the concrete human individualities and the common concerns of our every day life, because his heart was possessed with 'devotion to something afar from the spheres of our sorrow's—he had gazed on nature's naked loveliness,

> Actaeon-like, and now fled astray
> With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness...
> Pursued by his own thoughts.

For such a person, who has rightly compared himself to 'a herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart', it was quite natural to be introvert and to weave his poetry, spider-like, out of his own pet thoughts, dreams, desires and aspirations, even though they were quite in tune with the revolutionary idealism of the age in which he lived and wrote. It is this introspective temper which also accounts for the glaring fact that many of his heroes are identical with him, guided and inspired, as they are, by the same desires and dreams which haunted his own mind. In the Prometheus Unbound the Titan, chained to the icy rocks, is really an image of Shelley himself who, in his great ode, prays to the wild west wind :

> Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
> I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !
> A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
> One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

The Titan was a saviour of mankind, a light-bringer and promoter of art, culture and scientific efforts, and Shelley has clearly set forth in the Preface to his lyrical drama : "my purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness."

And in his 'Ode to the West Wind', he implores the impetuous force of Nature to drive his dead thoughts over the universe to quicken a new birth :

> Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
> Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind.

Like Prometheus again Shelley was an undaunted opponent of tyranny in all its forms and manifestations, religious, social, poiltical and moral and mature wisdom of the long-suffering Titan that the tyrant is an object of pity, rather than of hate and contempt, because it is destined to be ultimately defeated and overthrown by the Creative Law immanent in the universe itself, and that by multiplying his atrocities and evil deeds the despot is only accelerating the process of his own undoing, is the wisdom of Shelley himself. And Prometheus is only a mouthpiece of his creator in his bitter words addressed

to the vision of the bleeding Christ :.

Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse, I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty and the just
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee.

The brave Titan is like Shelley, again, in his occasional lapses into dejection and sentimental self-pity :

Peace is in the grave
The grave hides all things beautiful and good.
All things are still; alas ! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, heaven can torment no more,

Finally, the Titan's conviction that all things are vain without love is an echo of Shelley's own cherished idea which finds its most elaborate and explicit expression in his 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty', and is succinctly embodied in the words of Asia :

Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God :
They who inspire it most are fortunate
...but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long suffering.

Q. 21. Analyse Act I to show the development of the Titan's character between the opening of the play and the conclusion of the First Act.

Ans. Act I of Prometheus Unbound is of crucial importance because it reveals the process of spiritual change which the Titan has undergone through suffering and invincible endurance of tortures heaped upon him by Jupiter for three thousand years. He gave Jupiter all he has and in return he chained him to the icy rocks 'years and ages, night and day', and trampled down his beloved race of man by his thought-executing ministers. His first reaction to this ingratitude was blind hate born of grief, which prompted him to pronounce a terrible curse :

I curse thee ! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
Till thy Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony;
And thine omnipotence, a crown of pain,
No cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

But his endurance and fortitude gradually made him a sovereign of his suffering, buoyed up by the inextinguishable hope that the creeping hours would eventually bring the destined moment which

must drag him to kiss the bleeding feet of the victim, whom he has tied on the rack. He has come to realize that his hollow tyrant is more deserving of his pity than his disdain or derision :

> I speak in grief,
> Not exultation, for I hate no more
> As then ere misery made me wise.

He has forgotten his curse, which had thrilled and terrified the elements, and is anxious to hear his actual words. He summons the Jupiter himself for the purpose, which pours out the language of the curse into his ears till he exclaims :

> Words are quick and vain :
> Grief for a while is blind, and so was mine.
> I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

This is interpreted by his mother, Earth, as a symptom of his surrender to the will of the mighty antagonist, but Ione rightly asserts :

> Fear not : 'tis but some passing spasm,
> The Titan is unvanquished still.

This spiritual strength has to face the subtler torture which Jupiter has sent with the Furies, led by Mercury.

Before this trial, however; he must resist the Temptation offered by Mercury who approaches him as a subtle friend of oily tongue and tells him that despite his wisdom, firmness and virtue he would not be able to withstand single-handed the wrath of the omnipotent. He would, therefore, do well to subdue his will and make submission meek to soften the heart of the mightiest. The Titan flatly refuses to try submission :

> Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
> In brief Omnipotence, secure are they.

But he awaits the retributive hour which will end the Tyrant. Mercury still urges him to purchase his place among the gods 'lapped in voluptuous joy'. This is also rejected with contempt and when Mercury says that he wonders at and pities him the Titan rejoins caustically :

> Pity the self-despising slaves of heaven
> Not men within whose mind sits peace serene,
> As light in the sun, throned.

Mercury departs and the Furies proceed to apply their subtle torture for shaking the serenity of his mind. They show him the visions of two mighty tragedies of human history—the failure of the French revolution, and the perversion of the noble creed of crucified Christ at the hands of his ministers and followers. They jaringly ask him to 'behold the emblem : those who endure deep wrongs for man only heap thousand fold torment on themselves and on him (man). The Titan is deeply shaken, but does not yield :

The sights with which thou torturest, gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.

This overwhelming experience opens his eyes to the indispensable necessity of love—'I feel most vain all hope but love. His mind recalls Asia. exiled in a far off valley, and this is a signal for the process of retribution to start. Reeling under the stumming blow dealt him by the subtle friends Prometheus yet holds fast to his high mission :

I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things.

In this way the opening act of the play clearly indicates the spiritual change which the hero undergoes under the stress of the prolonged torment which he endures bravely and patiently. His will is thus purified and he stands on the brink of the transformation which is imaged in the glorious dream of Panthea.

Q. 22. Justify the remark that Act I of Prometheus Unbound is the most dramatic because it contains conflict.

Ans. The opening Act of Shelley's lyrical drama is certainly the most dramatic part of the play, and it is in this part that Shelley stands very close to the original Greek play, *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus. The Act has three dramatic situations, one leading to the other, and all linked together by a process of mounting conflict and tension, resulting in the hard-won triumph of the Titan.

In the first situation the bound Titan is addressing Jupiter, the omnipotent ruler of the universe who has reduced the race of man to a state of abject slavery, and chained him, for his service to mankind, to the icy caves to suffer excruciating pains, without respite and relief. He has endured his torment for three thousand years till he h s become the monarch of his kingdom of suffering, sustained by his uanshakable hope that the destined hour of his defeat and ruin would eventually come to push him down from his altitude to kiss the bleeding feet of his invincible victim. But long suffering has made him wiser, so that he would rather pity him than hate him. He has forgotten the words of his curse that he pronounced on his ungrateful tyrant in the blindness of his grief, and he would fain recall them in order simply to recant them. And when the words actually greet his hungry ears he is shocked into silence for a moment; then tells the Earth, his mother, that he can now wish no body to suffer.

While the Titan is settled in this serenity of mind His eyes are dazzed by the sight of Mercury alighting on the spot followed by the black swarm of hideous Furies, a new instrument of subtler torture devised by Jupiter to unrest the secret about his future, locked up in

the heart of the unbending foe. Mercury and Prometheus face each other as exponents of two conflicting points of view. Mercury speaks as a polished and persuasive orator who has been commanded by the ruler of heaven to execute, against his will, a new instrument of torture upon a fellow deity whom he loves and admires for his wisdom, endurance and goodness. But vain is his single-handed opposition to his omnipotent antagonist with inexhaustible wit for devising newer and subtle tortures. Proper it will, therefore, be for him to yield and spell out his secret and thus gradually reconcile himself to the ruler of heaven by meek submission. To this brave Titan firmly replies that submission is out of question to a despot who can reward friendly service with punishment and slavery and whose boasted omnipotence rests on an insecure foundation, awaiting the crushing blow of destiny at the fixed hour, which will bring the fragments of his glassy splendour down his ears. Mercury is amazed at this wrong-headed obstinacy and pities him for his wilful prolongation of misery. But the Titan repels him with the remark that he should better pity the self-despising slaves of heaven than him on whose heart peace sits enthroned in all its serenity.

The departure of Mercury is a signal for the Furies to ply their subtle art to overcome the stout resistance of the proud Titan. They seek to terrorize him with an account of the torture which they are going to inflict on him :

We will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
The foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony.

To this the Titan replies that he is king over himself and rules the conflicting throng of passions within as Jove rules them when Hell grows mutinous.

This infuriates the Furies and they summon all the spirits of evil and mischief to assault the Titan. They show him the vision of the French revolution which began nobly, but soon ended in confusion when the tyrants rushed in to capture the spoils. Then, comes the vision of Christ, the sanguine Saviour, on his bloody Cross whose religion of love and mercy served only to multiply violence and oppression, torture and persecution heaped by the agents and professors of his religion on men and women who are good and innocent like him. This is a stunning blow and staggers the resolute Titan who heaves a prolonged groan from his tormented heart. Yet he soon recovers his fortitude, girds up his soul and spells out his determination :

I would fain
Be what is my destiny to be
The Saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things :
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

Q. 23. Consider Demogorgon's final speech in Act, VI and say what relation it bears to the dramatic action of Act I.

Ans. The final speech of Demogorgon, which we quote below for ready reference, is a logical corollary of the dramatic action in Act I :

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love, to bear; to Hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter; nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free.

The opening speech of the Titan relates the woes he has suffered for three thousand years of 'sleep-unshetered hours and moments divided by keen pangs till they seemed years' in the hope that these wingless creeping hours will one day bring *that one* which is destined to drag the tyrant down to kiss the bleeding feet of his victim. How infinite is the period of his suffering, despite his hope, is brought home to the Titan by Mercury :

Yet pause, and plunge
Into eternity, where recorded time
......age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight.

The wrongs heaped upon the Titan are black as night because, as he himself tells Mercury :

I gave
All he has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day......
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers,
Such is the tyrant's recompense.

Yet suffering has made him wiser, and he is able to abjure hate and forgive the wrong-doer :

I speak in grief
Not excultation, for I hate no more
As then ere misery made me wise.

He even recants the Curse he had pronounced on Jupiter and regrets his own rashness of hate :

I doth repent me; words are quick and vain
Grief, for a while, is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

His plight is apparently hopeless; because he stands forth alone in strife against Jupiter who is obviously omnipotent, and can devise, withal, new instruments of torture, yet the Titan neither changes, nor falters, nor repents, and through his fortitude in the face of his endless woes he can create hope out of the wrecks of all his hope, amid

which he lies chained to the icy rock :

Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.

The one thing which remains as a constant factor in his character and behaviour is his defiance of the omnipotent tyrant his courage and determination 'never to submit or yield His suffering begins with his defiance :

Ay, do thy worst, thou art omnipotent
......Be thy swift mischiefs sent
Let thy malignant spirit more
In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate.

He remains impervious to all the flatteries and persuasions of Mercury and contemptuously derides him for his professed pity :

Pity the self-despising slaves of heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in sun, throned.

When the Furies appear before him in all their hideousness, bragging of their powers to torture and plague, the Titan unhesitatingly flings his defiance in their angry faces :

I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cups of pain.
Pain is my element, as hate is thine.

The Furies shake him to the very root of his fortitude, yet leave him invincible in his defiance of the omnipotent Jupiter :

For, though dread revenge
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest, gird my soul
With new endurance.

And now he realizes that nothing can succour and solace him as effectively as love, which crowned his youth, but has since been separated from him :

Yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love: and thou art far,
Asia ! who, when my being overflowed;
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.

The reward of all these qualities is the transfiguration which Panthea witnesses in her dream, and describes to Asia in ecstatic terms :

His pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure sight ·
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fall
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with the intoxication of keen joy.

Kitab Mahal Series on English Literature